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Mexican War Letters of Col. William Bowen Campbell of Tennessee, Written to Governor David Campbell of Virginia, 1846-1847

With Introduction and Notes by
ST. GEORGE L. SIOUSSAT.

(Reprinted from the Tennessee Historical Magazine, June 1915.)

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MEXICAN WAR LETTERS OF COL. WILLIAM BOWEN CAMPBELL OF TENNESSEE, WRITTEN TO GOVERNOR DAVID CAMPBELL OF VIRGINIA, 1846-1847

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DOCUMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

David Campbell (1779-1859) of Washington County, Virginia, was the grandson of "White" David Campbell, noted in the Indian fights in western Virginia in colonial times, and the son of John Campbell, prominent in Lord Dunmore's War and in the Revolutionary warfare in Virginia. After service in the War of 1812 David Campbell filled successively in Virginia the offices of state senator, clerk of the county court of Washington County, and major-general of the militia. From 1837 to 1840 he was governor of Virginia. On his retirement from this office he lived at his estate, "Montcalm," near Abingdon, Virginia, where he died in 1859.

Governor David Campbell, in many ways a remarkable man, possessed among other virtues an appreciation of the value of historical materials. He carefully preserved his papers, and it is to this fact that we owe the correspondence now printed. This is part of a long series of letters written to Governor David Campbell by his wife's nephew, William Bowen Campbell, of Tennessee,—who was also a cousin of Governor Campbell by descent from "White" David through a female line. These letters are now the property of William B. Campbell's son, Mr. Lemuel R. Campbell, of Nashville, who has kindly consented to the publication of this group in the MAGAZINE.[1]

Between Governor David Campbell and William B. Campbell there was a deep and lasting friendship. Governor Campbell had early interested himself in the education of his young relative from Tennessee and had assisted

[1]The genealogy and much of the history of the Campbells of Virginia is to be found in the extensive and valuable work by Mrs. J. S. (Margaret Campbell) Pilcher of Nashville, entitled *Historical Sketches of the Campbell, Pilcher, and Kindred Families*. . . . (Nashville, Tennessee, 1911, pp. 444.) Included in this volume is a sketch of William Bowen Campbell, written by his son, Lemuel R. Campbell, of Nashville, from which have been taken most of the facts set forth above. In the possession of Mrs. Pilcher are other interesting and valuable papers of her father, William B. Campbell, a considerable group of which also relate to the Mexican War.

him towards the study of the law under Henry St. George Tucker, of Winchester, Virginia. Thus William B. Campbell, who was born in Tennessee in 1807, spent part of his young manhood in Virginia. On his return to Tennessee he entered upon the practice of law at Carthage. In 1831 he was elected by the Legislature to his first office, that of one of the attorney-generalships of the state. This led him to move to White County, where for some years he made his home at Sparta. He left this place to return to Carthage, and in 1835 was elected representative for Smith County. In the same year he married Miss Frances I. Owen, daughter of Dr. John Owen, of Carthage. Next year he served with distinction in the Florida War. A series of letters written this year to Governor David Campbell we hope to publish in a later number of the MAGAZINE.

On his return he was elected to Congress from his district, and continued in the house of representatives for two terms. He preferred his life at home, and in 1843 declined reelection. For a few years he was in private life; then, on the outbreak of the Mexican War, he was elected Colonel of the First Tennessee Regiment, and served as a volunteer for the term of twelve months. Of the campaign in Mexico we shall have more to say below.

The later career of William B. Campbell, well-known to Tennesseans, must be summarized briefly. On his return from the Mexican service he was elected a judge of the circuit court in his section of Tennessee. In 1851, after the exciting year of the Nashville Convention and the Compromise, he was nominated by the Whigs for the governorship and was triumphantly elected, the last governor to be chosen by that party. At the close of one term he refused to run again, and entered into business. After a sojourn in New Orleans he became president of the Bank of Middle Tennessee at Lebanon, in which town he thereafter made his home. As a private citizen he followed the Whig party to its downfall, and in 1860 supported the candidacy of John Bell. Strenuously opposing secession, he declined a high military command offered by President Davis, and in 1862 accepted a brigadier-generalship in the Federal army upon the understanding that he should not be assigned to active duty in the field. In 1864 he gave his support to the McClellan ticket, but through the interference of Andrew Johnson, the military governor, the electors on this ticket withdrew their names.

William B. Campbell was one of the representatives elected to the Thirty-ninth Congress, but was not permitted

to take his seat until 1866. He now gave his adherence to Johnson's administration and was frequently called into consultation by the President. On August 9, 1867, he died at his home near Lebanon, Tennessee. Few men have been more loved in Tennessee, and none have passed through political life with more unsullied reputation.

It is now proper briefly to describe the political and military situation which existed at the time that William B. Campbell volunteered his services and was elected colonel of his regiment.

The month of February, 1846, found General Zachary Taylor with United States troops at Corpus Christi, upon the Nueces River in Texas near the Gulf Coast, at which point he had been encamped for several months. On February 4 he received orders from Washington to occupy a position on the east bank of the Rio Grande. Preparing without haste his plans for carrying out these orders, Taylor established a base at Point Isabel, a bluff which commanded one of the shallow bays that are found on this part of the Texas coast. Opposite Point Isabel was a channel or arm (Brazo) of the sea which the Mexicans called *El Brazo de Santiago,* and which the American soldiers chose to name *The Brazos.* The channel lay between islands, of which that immediately to the south bore the name of Santiago, to which also by the Army of the United States the word *Brazos* was applied. A few miles farther to the south the Rio Grande emptied into the Gulf. Here in the last days of March Taylor took up his quarters, opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros. A month later, on April 24, a scouting party of American dragoons under Captain Thornton was ambushed and sixteen were killed or wounded. Upon this Taylor called upon the governors of Texas and Louisiana for volunteers. On May 3 the fort at Point Isabel was unsuccessfully bombarded by the Mexicans under General Arista. Within a week came the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de Guerrero. The latter name marked a ravine or former river bed, and this or one nearby was called by the Americans Resaca de la Palma. Victorious in both of these encounters the Americans soon forced the Mexican army to evacuate Matamoros, and thus by May 18 gained control of the lower Rio Grande.

The news of the outbreak of hostilities had reached Washington on May 9, and on the eleventh the President had sent in his war message. Within two days the declaration of war by Congress was ready for Polk's signature. There followed a period of delay in which the administration, em-

barrassed by difficulties with General Winfield Scott, endeavor to plan a campaign. Meanwhile Taylor impatiently waited at Matamoros. The volunteer troops, which began to pour in upon him far more rapidly than his means of subsistence and transportation could accommodate, included some of which had been raised as a result of a call issued by General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, who now, as on former occasions, had undertaken without authority to anticipate directions from the War Department. As indicated above, Taylor, acting under orders from Washington, had requisitioned volunteers from Louisiana and Texas. It was supposed that these soldiers had enlisted for six months, but it soon developed that under the Act of 1795 they could be held for but three months. Some of these short-time troops were the first to reach Taylor, and in August large numbers of them returned. Meanwhile early in June the twelve-month volunteers authorized by the war act began to arrive at Santiago Island, coming by the Gulf from New Orleans. It is stated that "with the exception of two regiments, one from Georgia and one from Alabama, and a battalion raised in and near Baltimore, the troops were all from the Mississippi Valley—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana."

Justly distrustful of the legality of General Gaines's requisition, the governor of Tennessee, Aaron V. Brown, a political and personal friend of Polk, merely issued a proclamation calling upon the citizens to be ready in case a summons from the War Department should come. May 16 this official requisition was issued from Washington, and obedient to it, Governor Brown called for the enlistment in Tennessee of three regiments, one of cavalry and two of infantry, to serve for twelve months unless sooner discharged. The total number of men desired was about three thousand; more than thirty thousand volunteered. The Union and Planters' Banks advanced the funds necessary for financing the mustering in of the troops. Because of the great numbers a choice had to be made by election, and the successful competitors were ordered to rendezvous at Camp Taylor near Nashville. By June 3 twelve companies had been mustered in and were organized into one regiment. Thus was established the First Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers. The field officers were then chosen by election.

At this point we leave the story to Colonel Campbell's own words. In the foot-notes, however, it will be attempted to add a few necessary explanations and to indicate the correct spelling of persons and places. For assistance in the

latter regard the editor is under great obligations to Dr. Justin H. Smith, of Boston, Massachusetts, who has shared with the MAGAZINE the expense of copying these letters. General accounts of the Mexican War are readily accessible in the histories of Schouler and McMaster, and a more detailed narrative in the second volume of Mr. G. L. Rives's work, *The United States and Mexico,* 1821-1848 (New York, 1913.) Appended to the latter is a considerable bibliography in which will be found the titles of most of the older works upon the Mexican War, such for example as that of Ripley. Not listed by Rives, but of some interest as describing closely the Monterey Campaign, is a little book by T. B. Thorpe, *Our Army at Monterey. . . .* (Philadelphia, 1847). Besides this another work deserves special mention. In the Nashville *Union,* in 1846 and 1847, was published a series of letters or articles entitled *Reminiscences of a Campaign in Mexico; by a Member of "The Bloody First."* These sketches with an historical introduction were republished in book form (Nashville, 1849). No author's name appears upon the title page, but the preface is signed by J. B. Robinson. This is apparently a misprint, for it is likely that the author was J. B. Robertson. The writer was one of the soldiers in Colonel Campbell's regiment, and the book covers about the same period as the *Letters.* From it has been taken in part our account of the organization of the First Tennessee Regiment.

With the following exceptions the letters are reproduced as Colonel Campbell wrote them: (1) The abbreviation "&", used consistently by Colonel Campbell, has in every case been expanded to "and;" (2) omissions of punctuation obviously due to haste or carelessness have been supplied; (3) except in the first letter the usual words of farewell have been omitted; (4) a few purely personal allusions have been omitted, the omission being indicated in every case by the usual sign. ST. GEORGE L. SIOUSSAT.

Wm. B. Campbell to Governor David Campbell.

1. NASHVILLE, June 4, 1846.

I write you a few lines in haste today that you may know that I was on yesterday elected the Col. Commandant of the 1st Regt. Ten.[2] Volunteers. It is a noble command being composed of 12 companies of about 90 men each, each company having 80 privates. I shall be off myself with the remainder of the command on the morning of the 6th inst. to report to Genl. Gaines at New Orleans. I left home on Saturday last and did not then believe that I would be elected the Col., and my wife will be in deep affliction when she is informed that she will not see me again for twelve months. Her health is not very good and I have great uneasiness for her, but I could not get out of this business with honor, and must now trust in a kind providence for the protection and support of my dear wife and dear children. I shall expect to hear from you often and particularly on the subject of my duties as Col., the etiquette, etc., of the army. Do write often to my wife, for she is now nearly heart-broken and will need all the consolation and comfort your letters always give. The old political companies were those called for by the Govr. and it so hap[p]lened that 3-4 of those in my Regt are democratic officers, but there is a majority of 200 Democrats of the rank and file, yet I beat a Major Genl. and a Democrat 169 votes. So you see I out ran the Whig strength. I will in a hour take quarters with my Regt. from which I expect not to be separated until we end the service. James Campbell is in good health. Present my truest affection to my dear Aunt and believe me to be your affectionate and devoted nephew.

2. STEAMBOAT TENNESSEE, 50 MILES ABOVE MEMPHIS, June 8, 1846.

I am now on my way to the Rio Grande and have with me five companies of my Regiment, the other seven having gone on ahead. I will join them on Saturday in New Orleans. The boat will touch at Memphis and I will write you a few lines to keep you advised of my whereabouts and condition. All my affairs are moving on very well and I think I shall have a very fine Regiment when I get to Matamoras.[3] I go directly on to Genl. Taylor's camp and shall remain no longer in New Orleans than the transports can be had, which I hope will be ready on my arrival there. I have now such a crowd and so much confusion yet that I cannot write much now. My men seem willing to obey and to be governed and all are getting on well. I will write you from New Orleans. Direct your letters to me at New Orleans to the care of Messrs. Allison, Allen and Co., who will forward them to me.

3. NEW ORLEANS, June 14, 1846.

I have just time to write you a word or two to let you know that I arrived here yesterday and have my Regiment of 43 officers and 1,000 non-commissioned officers and privates, encamped in the lower part of this city. I have transports engaged and shall be off on to-morrow or the next day with the whole force for Point Isabel. We have fine weather and but little sickness amongst the men. My own health is very fine and I have great confidence that I shall stand the campaign well. If we

[2]Tennessee.

[3]Matamoros; but Colonel Campbell's spelling was widely used in contemporary American publications.

shall have fighting to do, I do not calculate that we will have an insignificant enemy to contend with. The Mexicans are better soldiers than they have character for. After the battle of the 8th[4] Gen. Taylor called a council of his officers 13 being present and 9 of the 13 were opposed to fighting on the next day and in favor of entrenching the American army at Point Isabel—this looks like the Mexicans had convinced them that they could fight well. I saw our relation Mr. Campbell Cummings today. He resides here.

[Postscript.] My Regiment is said here to be the finest looking Regt. that has passed here en route to Genl. Taylor. I hope they will give a good account of themselves on the Rio Grande.

4. BRASOS[5] ISLAND, July 3, 1846.

My whole Regt. are now laying on this island, encamped, having anchored of[f] the Bar nearly 2 weeks ago, but a whole week elapsed before it was taken off the transports by the lighters which can only pass the bar measuring about 6 to 8 feet of water. It is a most uncertain and dangerous place to land and whenever the least wind prevails vessels are thrown on shore. I had the bad luck to be wrecked on the Steamer Col. Harney in passing from the vessel which brought me over to the shore. She grounded on the bar and we were out all night in the breakers, but no accident occurred to any one on board, although about daylight in the morning she bilged and the hull filled with water. My men were taken off by small boats and I saw them all safe taken off before I quit the wreck. But now we are all in good spirits and in very good health, the climate is a very fine one, having a breeze here night and day as strong as the March winds at Montcalm. The water however is not so good as may be had in the hills of Holston, as we here sink a hole in the ground and place a flour barrel in it and the water seeps in through the sand and although a little brackish is pretty good and I think not unhealthy. I shall march from this place in a few days for Barita[6] on the Rio Grande about 30 miles distant below Matamoras on that River, where I may be encamped for some time, as that point will be convenient to be supplied with provisions. I now think we are to have a most *masterly inactive* campaign, as the troop[s] now on the Rio Grande greatly exceeds the means provided for subsistence and transportation, and they are daily arriving. There preceded me here six Regts. from La., one from Ky. and one from St. Louis, Mo., and several companies from other States, and now they are coming in from Tenn., Miss., Maryland and Washington City, and expected from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and Miss., and Ala., so that I have no idea that Genl. Taylor will be able to move the whole force now here until about fall. When the secretary[7] was calling so loudly for volunteers, he should have been giving more particular attention to the subsistence and Quartermasters department in this region and if there should be delay, inactivity or disaster, it will in my opinion be properly attributable to the inefficiency of means furnished in those two departments. This Island is but a lump of sand and has been nearly all overflowed and a town once here is to be seen no trace of. But the air is fine and the country along the Rio Grande is represented as pleasant and tolerably healthy. The water of that river being deemed as good as that of the Mississippi. Genl. Taylor is moving his force in detachments up the river above Matamoras *slowly*, and what he intends doing I know not nor have I any intimation of the plans of the Gov-

[4]Palo Alto.
[5]Usually spelled "Brazos." See the introduction.
[6]Burrita.
[7]Marcy.

ernment as to what is to be done by the army. Genl. Taylor from what I hear of him is a brave man and a hardy soldier, but not talented and I fear not capacity enough for his present position. And since Genl. Scott has perpetrated suicide,[8] Taylor will be kept where he is—there being no officer in the U. S. army in whom the admn. of Mr. Polk has sufficient confidence to entrust with the command. I do hope we shall during the summer be marched upon Monterey, as the route to that city would be through a hilly healthy country and the city has a population of 30 or 40,000 inhabitants. But really I have no news here now than you have seen in the papers, for the last 20 day[s] there has been not one word of news in relation to the army of occupation and the Mexicans. We cannot ascertain whether the Mexicans are raising an army and if they are where they are concentrating. I think they are doing little or nothing towards defending their soil. I have heard the rumor here that the Oregon question is settled at 49° with the navigation for a term of years to the Hudson Bay Company of the Columbia. For myself I should not care to hear of the settlement of the Mexican difficulty as there seems to be no prospect of an active campaign and a whole year may pass by before another blow shall be stricken. . . . I am by no means in first rate spirits as to my Regt. for about 6 companies have fine officers and will soon drill finely but the other six, I fear the officers are incapable of ever drilling their Companies so as to make them respectable. I shall however not despair and will try and bring them all right. Politics is somewhat in my way as all my field officers are Democrats and are somewhat jealous of any character I may acquire and therefore do not second my exertions to institute rigid discipline, but I shall overcome all that and they will be mistaken as to my ulterior views of political stations. I hope I shall never again have a desire to ingage in any political contest or to seek office. When I return home I will lead a private life, and seek my own and the happiness of my family and dear relatives. This shall be my desire and my ambition the remainder of my life. . . .

I have two fine horses which I brought from Tenn. They have been much worsted in the voyage here, but I hope soon to recruit them and make them serve me during the campaign, and I have an Irish servant who is kind and attentive and serves me faithfully. So do not fear but I shall get on well if some disease does not overtake me. . . .

There are now more than twelve thousand volunteers in the army of occupation scattered along the Rio Grande, here and about Point Isabel and towards Matamoras, and if Genl. Taylor had the means of supplying his army, he could make an immediate move upon Monterey and could strike an effective blow. This is a much worse country to campaign in than Florida. Water and wood is so very scarce. I have not seen timber yet. We cook with coal brought from Ohio or Penn. Florida has an abundance of fine timber and excellent water. Again adieu.

5. LOMETA,[9] RIO GRANDE, July 11, 1846.

You will see by the above that I am on the move having left Brasos Island on the 7 inst and arrived here the same day with one half of my Regt. the other half have not yet come up. This place is a small hill on the bank of the river just large enough for my Regt. to camp on and the word *Loma*—a hill—*Lometa*—a little hill— indicates the kind of place. This is about 20 miles from the mouth of the river and 4 miles above Barita.—the river is now very high, its bankks overflown everywhere and all along it from here down presenting the appearance of a great lake—the water is fresh to the mouth, but as muddy as the Mississippi,—the

[8]The reference is to Taylor's correspondence with Marcy and Polk.
[9]Lomita.

whole country is a prairie with here and there a growth of shrubbery or small trees called chaporal,[10] no tree being higher than 10 or 15 feet and six inches through. The army of Genl. Taylor is encamped from Brasos Island to Rynoso[11] on the Rio Grand covering a distance of at least 100 miles—I suppose there are now in the field under the command of Genl. Taylor at least 15,000 volunteers, independent of the Regular army, but there is no certainty yet of his intention to strike a blow. I fear nothing will be done and that we will be kept in camp on this river during the summer. I can form no opinion as to the health of this country in the latter part of the summer and fall, but at present this is the most delightful climate I ever experienced in my life. There is always day and night a strong wind and breeze and the air is soft and dry all the time—never sultry—far more pleasant than our summers in Ten. or Virginia. This place bids fair to be healthy, as I succeeded here a regiment which had fine health here for the past month. At Brasos the water was brackish and gave every one a dissentery [*sic*]—here the river water is good and when it settles tastes agreeable. We are visited here every day by many of the Mexicans, who come to our camp with beef, mutton, kid, eggs and watermelons, milk in abundance for sale and now we are well supplied with some of the delicacies of the table. These Mexicans are nothing but herdsmen having large droves of cattle and sheep and goats and horses and on the Rio Grande cultivate little or nothing and are a miserable, ignorant, filthy race, but seem to be healthy and stout. The immense waste of prairie and water is painful to look upon, with here and there a miserable thatched and mud cottage to relieve the view. I have lost 3 men by death since I left Ten, and I fear that my principal surgeon who is at Matamoras is also dead. . . .

I am in hopes Genl. Taylor will march this summer on Monterey and Saltillio,[12] and if so we will have a fine high healthy country to operate in, but we have no accounts that the Mexicans are embodying at any place. I am only in fear that the difficulty will be settled before I shall have a chance to give my Regt. a trial in battle. As I have come this far I would like to have at least one engagement with the enemy. Adieu.

Direct to Point Isabel, Texas, 1st Regt. Ten. Vol. Army of Invasion.

6. Camp at Lometa, Mexico, July 31, 1846.

I have only to say a word to you that my health is still very good, although I have much sickness in my camp. I have loss [*sic*] 7 men since I came to this place about 22 days ago, and I have about 130 on the sick list, yet I cannot say that this is a sickly place as the sea breeze is so strong that the air must be purified by it. I hope soon to be ordered to march up the country and may get in to a higher and healther rigion [*sic*] or where we may have good water. The six months troops have all been ordered home and my Regt. is now the 2nd Regt. of vol. that are in the field as to priority and I think now if there is any fighting to do I shall have a chance.

7. Lometa, Mexico, August 9, 1846.

I am still encamped at this place, having been here more than one month, and although I have orders from Genl. Taylor to go to Carmago[13] as soon as boats can be furnished by the Quartermasters to transport my command, yet is very uncertain when I shall leave here, as boats may

[10]Chaparral.
[11]Reynosa or Reinosa.
[12]The Castilian pronunciation of Saltillo suggests Saltillio.
[13]Camargo.

not be tendered me in the next two weeks. You will have seen that all the six months volunteers who were accepted by Genl. Gaines have all been discharged and sent home, and now are kept in service but 12 months men and when I arrived at Brasos Sant Iago[14] with my Regt. I had been preceded by only one corps of 12 months men, to wit, a Louisville Ky. Regt. commanded by Col. Ormsby, so that I am the 2nd Regt. of the volunteers on Mexican territory. It has been considered as an advantage to get here first as the first would be moved up the river and into the interior first, and so Genl. Taylor stated to all who came, that they would take their turn in bein[g] moved up the river. It is very disagreeable at Brasos St. Iago and all desire to be moved forward. Being next to the 1st Ky. Regt. and having been assured by Genl. Taylor that I would move up next to him, I was greatly disappointed at getting an order from him a few days ago, designating the the order of the various Regts. encamped on the river, to be moved to Carmago, and 1st Ky. Regt. 1st, Baltimore Battallion 2nd, 3 Ohio Regts. 3, 4, and 5, 2nd Ky. Regt. 6th, Miss Regt. 7th, and mine the 8th, when I had arrived in this country before all but the 1st named and most of those placed before me had not left home when I landed at Brasos St. Iago. This injustice on the part of Genl. Taylor I will look into and have an explanation, as I can prove by four respectable officers that the day before his order bears date, he stated to them that my Regt. should move next to the 1st Ky. Regt. I have been very busy attending to the interest of my Regt. and have not been about the person of Genl. Taylor and this I have no doubt is the reason why I have been slorred [*sic*] over He is a very plain man of very ordinary intellect and the battles of Palo Alto, and of Resecca [*sic*] have been puffed up so much in the papers that the old fellow thinks he may be president and flattery may have great influence with him, and I doubt not that I have been passed over by the artifice of officers who have been about the Genl's person a great deal and have plastered him over with praise for the battles and feed his hopes with promises of the future. But I will not despair of having a part in what may yet be to do and will be ready to march in the order I have been placed. But you will see before the campaign is over that Genl. Taylor is altogether inadequate to the station he holds. For the report of every man who visits him is that he is a very ordinary man and they fear his competency to command an army. There was no ability displayed in the battles of Palo and Resacca. Nothing but brute courage won those days and this is the opinion of 9 tenths of the officers of the Regular army nearly all of whom have a very poor opinion of Genl. Taylor's capacity and ability as a Genl. I have been very anxious to leave here because my Regt. has been very sickly and I have been very unlucky. At this place I have lost by death 12 men—the measels broke out in the ranks after I encamped here and having no shelters but tents to protect the men from the weather,—they could not be so taken care of as to save them and nearly half who have taken the measels have died. But I wish you not to believe that this country is unhealthy. At Brasos St. Iago the water was so brackish that it produced severe bowel complaints but here we use the Rio Grande water which is healthy and there is not more sickness in my camp than would be were we encamped in Ten. except the measels. We have the sea breeze here constantly and the weather is less sultry and never so warm as in Ten. and the shade is always cool and the nights the most pleasant I ever experienced any where. The dews are so light that they are not fe[l]t and we lay out in the open air here without the least injury,—no dampness at all in the atmosphere and take it altogether what I have seen in 1½ month, it is the

[14]Santiago.

most delightful climate I ever experienced. I visited Matamoras a few days ago to see Genl. Taylor, but he had left for Carmago and as yet I have not seen him. Matamoras is a very old looking Spanish town having the appearance of having been a much larger place; it now has many very [?] buildings all built in a peculiar manner with flat roofs. Many of the best are now appropriated to army uses. It is now the most unpleasant town to be in I ever saw, being full daily and nightly of the unrestrained Texan soldiers, who are the wildest and most dissipated set of men I ever saw. The[y] remind me of the character and description of the Russian Cossacks, and the Mexican population is of the most savage and vicious character, the better class having left. The country from this place up on both sides of the Rio Grand is the finest lands I ever saw for planting purposes. The good lands are covered generally with a thick growth of muskete[15] and ebono[16] trees and various kinds of smaller growth all covered with thorns like the young locusts and thorn bushes of your country which makes the chaporal or thicket almost impassable, yet the trees are nowhere more than 20 feet high, all of a low scrubby order. The whole valley of the Rio Grande is represented as a most fertile valley, producing Indian Corn, sugarcane, cotton which grows three years from one planting, and mellons,—there is not much fruit here,—some orange and lime trees ,and figs all of which are cultivated. There are now many large stores in Matamoras and much business done there in sales to the soldiers and the Mexicans. The latter sell us whatever they have of eatables—but they are a faithless race and are not to be trusted. As to our living we are supplied with pickle[d] pork, some bacon in sides, crackers in barrels and some flour which many of our men prefer. I like the crackers best of any bread. We have coffee and sugar and some rice, and are supplied twice a week with a ration of fresh beef. This country abounds with cattle the finest in the world, and it is bought here by the contractors at about one cent a pound and they get from the government 5 cents. I have not space or time to inform you of the great frauds that are perpetrated on the Government here in carrying on this war, the great prices given for old steamboats and other extravagant prices paid, no doubt to favorites or to persons who share with officers the spoils. There is now some talk that Genl. Taylor intends a descent on Monterey from Carmago, after he concentrates a force large enough at the latter place. But I think he will not move from Carmago before October. There are now about 20 Govt. steamboats in this river out at Brasos Stiago, and could very soon take provisions and men to Carmago, but there is evidently great imbecility in the movements, and as I have before said Genl. Taylor is not adequate to the station, yet this is between us and time will develop the truth of my conjecture. I have been giving close attention to military tactics, having Cooper's tactics, and Scott's work on tactics, and the Army Regulations. My military library is as large now as I have use for, and I am daily improving myself in tactics and in the army regulations and in the details of the service. My Regiment are in a tolerable good state, several companies being well drilled, and in Regimental and Battallion drill they all perform several maneuvers very well—such as forming column by companies or by divisions of 2 companies and changing front on any company or division—close column at company or division distance—deploying in to line of battle, passing defiles and forming hollow squares,—and the manual of arms they perform very well, and are getting to march pretty well with the step. I have a very good military band. And there is an excellent state of good feeling amongst

[15]Mesquite.
[16]Ebony.

the officers field and company. I feel very confident in my ability to manage my Regt. so as to make it efficient and creditable in the field. . . . Your letter of the 3rd July was read last night and I thank you and my dear aunt for the interest you take in the welfare of my dear family, it is a great consolation to me and would be sweet at a dying moment. My health has been better than it has been for two or 3 years and I have uniform good spirits and I think capable of enduring as much as any man in the lines.

I cannot write more now. You will please direct your letters to Matamoras, Mexico, 1st Regt. Tenn. vol. Army of Invasion and I must ask you to pay the postage and they will be forwarded to me. If the postage is not paid the letters would remain at Matamoras until I sent for them specially and paid the postage. When the postage is paid any passenger will bring them on to the army. Adieu my dear uncle.

In a few days I with my Regt. will be on our way in passage to Carmago. 4 companies will be carried by water and the heavy baggage, the remaining 8 companies will go by land with such baggage as will be necessary on the march and will be encamped I doubt not near Carmago until October.

The measles have been in my camp and about 10 have died of that disease, but except measles the health of the Regt. is good.

8. CAMP NEAR CARMAGO, August 21, 1846.

I write today in great haste, having got to a new place, and as yet not fixed up with any comfort and 9 companies of my Regt. here, the remainder daily expected. A portion of the regular force under Genl. Worth moved off two days ago toward Monterey will go 80 miles and await the arrival of all the force that Genl. Taylor takes to Monterey. I expect that my Regt. will be in the expedition to Monterey and Saltillio. We have no definite news about the Mexican army or force at Monterey. Genl. Taylor is a very plain man, agreeable and decided, but he is evidently a man of ordinary ability. The great jealousy that exists here amongst all the officers and particularly amongst the volunteers makes the service disagreeable, yet I think I am so prudent that I will be able to get along without much josteling. I will write you before I leave here more in detail the plan of the campaign, etc. My health is excellent.

9. CAMP NEAR CARMAGO, August 28, 1846.

I cannot find time to write many letters, and therefore nearly all my writing is done to you and to my wife. I have not written six letters to other persons since I landed at Brasos Island. My whole Regiment is now encamped here, but it is most sorely afflicted with sickness being near three hundred on the sick list, and every day one or two are laid away in eternal sleep. I have had 32 deaths in my Regiment, and about 40 discharged from disease and broken down constitutions from disease. So you see my Regt. of one thousand is fast wasting away in this tropical climate. A majority of the deaths that have occurred were from measles; now the men have fever. It is very warm here, and not much breeze like we had at Lometa, and no water any where but in the rivers. The valley of the Rio Grande is really a thirsty desert,—after having to travel 50 or 60 miles without finding a drop of water to quench thirst, and when the desert has to be pas[s]ed, water must be packed along both for man an ho[r]se. Carmago is situated on the bank of the St. Juan[17] about 4 miles from its entrance into the Rio Grande and is now a dilapidated village which once had a population of 2000, but now has

[17]San Juan.

not more than 500. About two months ago the rise in the river overflowed the towns and a very large number of the houses which were built of brick dried in the sun, were undermined by the dissolving of the brick and the houses tumbled down. The St. Juan as well as the Rio Grande overflows the whole valley at this season of the year. The summer rise came much earlier this season than usual and the rise still continues, there being now two months that the Rio Grande has been out of its banks and the whole valley overflown. And the ground that I and my Regt. are now encamped on, was under water 2 feet 6 weeks ago, it is now however dry. This whole country is covered by a dense growth of small timber and shrubbery of the most cragged and thorny I ever beheld,—every bush, tree, plant and every insect and serpent here, has a sting or thorn. The prickle pears here grown 6 or 8 feet high and there are also other growths here of the same *Cactus* species.

The St. Juan is navigable only for a few miles above this place, and this is the highest point towards Monterey that provisions can be transported in steam Boats.

August 30th.

I have received orders for five hundred picked men of my Regt. to be held in readiness to march to Monterey; and strange to tell out of the one thousand that I left Nashville with, I shall be hard pressed to get 500 *effective* men for the order,—such has been the effect of disease in my camp for ten days past. My average is about a death a day and today two have died and several more are expected to die hourly. In five or six days my command will march for Monterey and I hope the men I take with me will be freed from the infection that seems to prevail in this climate and at this place. My own health continues good and I hope to preserve it as I am very particular in my diet and in not exposing myself in any way that can with propriety be avoided. Genl. Worth has gone on as far as Seralvo[18] with a division of the Regular Army,—Genl. Percifor[19] F. Smith has gone on after him with a Brigade of Regulars and Genl. Twiggs is about moving with another division of Regulars—making in all about 4000 men. Genl. Butler of Ky. starts this week with a division of volunteers of four Regts. of 500 men each, and two Brigadiers Genl. to wit. Genl. Hamer of Ohio and Genl. Quitman of Mississippi, and my command composed a part of Genl. Quitmans Brigade. Although Genl. Pillow is my Brigadier, I have been temporarily detached with 500 men to go in the expedition to Monterey under Quitman who is far superior to Pillow in every point of view both as a man of talents and as a military man, and therefore I am not displeased at being detached and having the honor of going in the expedition. It is quite probable that we may march directly to Saltillio if not stop[p]ed by a superior force of the enemy.

Genl. Taylor is still here and I have not learned what day he leaves, perhaps he may go with the division of volunteers. The advance now at Seralvo will not leave there until the whole force intended for Monterey get there and then the whole army will move together. I am well pleased with Genl. Taylor, who though a plain blunt man is evidently a military man of great firmness and decision and is well informed and understands well all matters that he has to do with. Genl. Worth is a very scientific man and in the army we have many very able and experienced officers who are with Genl. Taylor and who can contribute to aid him in his conclusions.

[18]Cerralvo.
[19]Persifor.

Many of the appointments of Genls. made by the President from civil life are very ordinary men, but some are good, and of the best are Butler, Hamer and Quitman. Genl. Pillow is of the smallest caliber that has ever been elevated to so high a command, although he professes to be very friendly to me and is tolerably agreeable yet he seems not to know what to do and is often directing and interfering in matters which he properly has nothing to do with, but I will bear with him as long as he seems to be actuated by no unkind or improper feelings towards me.[20]

From all that can be learned in relation to Monterey, it is believed by Genl. Taylor that the Mexicans will not fight us at that place, that if we should have a fight it will be at Saltillio or in the passes of the mountains between Monterey and Saltillio. Monterey is about 180 miles distant from this place. We cross the St. Juan here and go to Meir[21] and thence leaving the Rio Grande to Seralvo. Col. Hayes[22] with his Regt. of Mounted Texans left Matamoras about 3 weeks ago and was directed by Genl. Taylor to go to St. Fernando[23] and Victoria and to Chene[24]. After getting that far without o[p]position or finding an enemy, he left his Regt. and came here and reported a few days ago to Genl. Taylor and has returned to his Regt. at Chene. Hays thinks we will find no emboddied Mexican force this side of the Seira Madre[25] Mountains and that in all probability no fight can be had short of St. Louis Potosi.[26] These Texans are mounted and in this war [?] are in many respects like the Cossacks. They are under no drill or discipline, but follow their leaders any where and if there is fighting they enter it with gallantry and fight in their own Western way and for service against the Mexicans are a first rate troop. Their hatred to the Mexicans is most implacable and the Mexicans have a perfect horror of a Texan. They are a most bold, hardy and desperate set of men, being inured to the climate, adventurers with fine constitutions, and often desperadoes and ruffians and renegades from the States of the first class. But amongst them are many first rate men, of fine talents and first rate characters, and of that number I take Col. Hays and Col. Walker to be very worthy and meritorious men. I am here just like a machine ready to obey any orders and I do not pretend to give my mind any trouble about what will be done by our Government in relation to this war, but I am in for twelve months and shall not think of returning home until my term of service shall have expired and if the war should be ended before that time and I be permitted to get home sooner than I expect, I shall be most agreeable [*sic*] disappointed.

The volunteer Regts. that go forward under Genl. Butler are one Ky. Regt. under Col. Ormsby and one Ohio Regt. under Col. Mitchell—commanded by Brigadier Genl. Hamer. And one Ten. Regt. under myself and one Mississippi Regt. under Col. Davis, commanded by Brigadier

[20]Gideon J. Pillow, as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1844 had been prominent in bringing about the nomination of Polk, and was not modest in laying claim to credit therefor. (See his letters in *American Historical Review*, Volume XI, pp. 841-843.) Among the letters of W. B. Campbell to Governor David Campbell there is a single letter,—the only one which seems to have been preserved,—from Governor Campbell to his nephew, filled with denunciation of the nominations made by Polk generally and of that of Pillow in particular. Governor Campbell, a Whig, bitterly reprehended Polk for the appointment of Democratic generals. It is doubtless in reply to this communication of Governor Campbell that Colonel Campbell refers to Pillow.

[21]Mier.

[22]Hays.

[23]San Fernando.

[24]China.

[25]Sierra Madre.

[26]San Luis Potosi.

Genl. Quitman. I feel gratified at my position and hope that I may be blessed with health to go through the campaign. I have this moment received my orders from Genl. Butler assuming [?] the command and informing me of what will be required to be done preparatory to the march and from this time until I learn more I shall be very busy making the necessary preparations.

10. CAMP NEAR MONTEREY, September 28, 1846.

Since I last wrote you, I and my command have passed through some new and most trying and important scenes,—The Battle at Monterey has been fought.—the enemy have been beaten and all is now quietness and composure in camp. The wounded have been transferred to town and placed in comfortable quarters. After a severe march from Carmago and resting only two days on the way I arrived here on the evening of the 19th inst with the Army under the command of Genl. Taylor. The army of Genl. Taylor was composed of three Divisions, one under Genl. Worth of about 2500 men, one under Genl. Twiggs of between 1500 and 2000 men and one volunteer Division under Genl. Butler of near 2000 men, and Genl. Hendersons Brigade of Texian mounted men of about 1000 men. It seemed to be well understood before we arrived here that the whole Mexican force were here and had been actively engaged since the battles near Matamoras of Palo Alto and Resica de la Palma, in fortifying the town and raising men and preparing to make a desperate resistance. On our arrival here, meeting with no resistance or impediment on the way,—the advanced guard were saluted by a fire from the large fort at the North west end of the town and never suffered to approach nearer than the range of a 12 pounder without being promptly fired at. Sunday 20th was employed in reconnoitering until evening when Genl. Worth moved off with his Division to take post on the west end of the town on the road to Saltillio, and to attack and take if possible three fortifications in that quarter and a fourth called the Bishops Castle[27] deemed very strong, all of which were in view as they were all situated on very high eminences and intended to command the passage west and the Saltillio road. On Monday the firing in that quarter showed that Worth was actively engaged. He had with him also one Regt. of Genl. Henderson['s] Brigade. The two Divisions of Genl. Twigg and Genl. Butler were ordered out, as was said to make a demonstration on the town that the force of the Mexican army might be diverted from Genl. Worth, but shortly after they were brought into the field, (for there is an immense plain in front of the town of more than two miles in extent) a part of Genl. Twiggs command became engaged at the north east end of the town in an attack upon some fortifications which were there, and shortly after the order came to me to move my Regt. to the support of the troops engaged in the attack in that quarter. I moved off at a quick pace and soon came under the range of the guns of the great fort called the Citadel at the North west end of the town and the guns of two forts directly in my front one about 300 yds in rear of the other. I moved on by the left flank of the line. When within 400 yds. of the outer fort one cannon ball raked my line, striking it about 10 feet in my rear and killed four and wounded badly 3 men of my Regt. This of course was calculated to produce a deep impression if not alarm in my whole line as they had all to pass by the spot where lay the dead and wounded. I shouted to them to march on—no time to stop—to the fort—to the fort,—when within 200 yards of the fort my intention was to display [deploy?] or rather form in to lines as each company came up and charge imme-

[27]The Obispado, usually described as the Bishop's Palace.

diately on the fort, but the fire from the artillery of the fort and the small arms in which the head of the line was now in range of, caused some confusion in the first company and the second filed off to the left and the next to the left of that and so on successively until the line was imperfectly formed to the left of the first company. Just at this moment the fire was most galling and destructive and caused my whole command to recoil and fall back 15 or 20 paces which left me between them and the fort. I hastened to ride to them and get in rear and by all artifice of language—by threats and by commands, I halted them and ordered them to form in line and charge the fort,—I found so much dismay, that I then apealed to the officers to lead their companies by the flank to the fort,—this appeal was successful and away they went,—before they reached the fort the Mexicans took to their heels and as our men ascended the wall they gave them a volley of musketry which told well upon them as they ran off. There was a large stone house with a flat roof in rear of the fort about 30 yds. which had parapet walls and sand bags upon the walls and was used as a breast work and 2 or 300 musket men were stationed on that building to annoy us in our approach to the fort. They also took to flight. The Mississippi Regt. was on my right and gallantly came up to the charge and rushed forward with my men, but my Regt. being more directly in front of the fort and nearer to it than the Miss. Regt. reached it sooner and were the command that stormed the fort. There was a large fort about 400 yds. in rear of the one taken which kept up so constant and heavy fire upon us that it was not deemed prudent not to advance upon it, and the men sheltered themselves as well as they could behind the walls and houses. I was shortly called on by my Brigadier Genl. Quitman to move my command up a street more in front of the city to sustain the battery of Capt. Ridgley.[28] I got together as many as I could and passed up a street about 400 yds. under a severe and constant cross fire from the enemy of artillery and small arms. Ridgley fired a few times and concluded he could effect nothing at that point and we returned with him to the fort that we had taken under the same deadly fire, having lost two men killed on this street and one badly if not mortally wounded. The Ohio Regt. was engaged further up town but not in so hot a place as the Ten. and Miss. Regts. were and several Regular Regts. were also engaged and some of them suffered much. But off [sic] all the Regts. who were on that day engaged in battle or have since been engaged none have suffered half so much as the Tennessee Regt. I left camp on the morning of the 21st Sept. with 384 officers and men, all told. In the rapid march to the field of battle many fell out of line from fatigue and other causes such as fear,—so that when I arrived within 200 yds. of the fort I had less than 300. My killed on that day amounted to 27, and my wounded to 77. 2 of the wounded have since died and six or seven more are mortally wounded.

This report of my killed and wounded, will tell where my Regt. were in the fight and whether they were in a hot place or not. No Regt. suffered half so much, and my only surprise and wonder is that the regiment did not run off the field like a gang of wild turkeys, before such a destructive fire. I was untouched throughout the whole fight, and that seems to be providential, as I was dressed in full uniform with my large red sash around me and mounted and along my lines all the time far more exposed than any of my men. I was in all my efforts on that day most actively and energetically sustained by my Lieut. Col. Saml. R. Anderson, who on that day proved himself to be a most gallant and brave officer, who was equally exposed on horseback with myself on the field and also escaped unhurt—a ball tearing his cap and another passing

[28]Randolph Ridgely, captain 3rd Artillery.

through his horse's mouth, but doing but little injury to him. My Adjt. Lieut. Heimen[29] was also on horseback during the action and behaved most gallantly. My Major R. B. Alexander was wounded badly early in the action and had to retire from the field before the hot work came on. He is a gallant and brave man, and was a loss to the Regt. The next day, the 22d, but little was done on the north and east side of the town, we held on to what we had gained. On the West the work went bravely on under Genl. Worth, and redoubt after redoubt was taken until the Bishop's Castle also fell. Worth opened a cannonade from the hills south of the town on the town and on the 23d Worth came down into the west end of the town and an attack was made by my Regt., the Miss. Regt., and a Texan Regt. on the East end and the fire was kept up all day on the 22 and 23. I was down with inflammation of the bowels, which I think I got hurt on the 21st, but on the 23d nothing decisive occurred except that Worth placed his command almost in the heart of the city. On the morning of the 24 the Mexicans sent in a flag for terms and hostilities ceased and Genl. Taylor and Genl. Ampudia occupied all that day in negotiating and about dark finally agreed that the Mexican army should march out with their arms with the honors of war and take with them one battery of artillery, and that they should march off beyond the River Carnadors [?] which is the mountain pass to Saltillo about 45 miles distance, and not to approach Monterey nearer than Lanares[30] and other designated points for 8 weeks during which time hostilities are to cease. The object of this cessation is to hear from the respective Governments in the hope that peace may be made without further effusion of blood.

Genl. Worth is evidently the hero of the Monterey battle, and in my opinion the most military officer in the army. Genl. Taylor seems to be a gallant old fellow—honest, blunt and plain, but I fear not genius enough for a commander. I feel like but little genlship was displayed in the sacrifice of my poor Regiment. I cannot learn who is the responsible man for placing them before the fort, as Genl. Taylor says he did not intend it and Genl. Quitman says he acted under orders—so the matter stands. I make no complaint about it and say nothing. Genl. Twiggs is an old granny and is unfit for a commander. Genl. Butler is a fine Gallant gentleman, was shot through the leg early on Monday morning and left the field. One of my Capts.—W. M. Allen and Lieut. Putman were killed dead—several of the officers were wounded, Lieut. Allen has lost his leg since by amputation. The whole number of killed in the 3 days fights does not reach to one hundred and the wounded does not reach to 300. I am now satisfied with war and I would like to get home and I do hope peace will be made. I do not fear danger when it is necessary to expose one's self, and I was exposed enough on the 21st for the exposure of 20 battles. I wish to return to my little ones and wife, and am willing to quit off with the fame I have gained on the 21st before Monterey. Lieut. Col. Anderson desires me to present you with his highest regards—that he would be much gratified to make your acquaintance. He is as worthy a man as he is a good soldier.

11. Camp Allen Near Monterey, November 2, 1846.

I can only write you a short letter to day to let you know of my continuous good health, and that the general health of the army is now very good. Soon after the battle there were many cases of chills and

[29]A. Heiman.
[30]Probably Linares.

fevers throughout the whole army, but that has now almost entirely subsided. It has been extremely dull in camp since the battle, and every one is anxiously awaiting the news from Washington, and hoping that some arrangements will soon be made by the two hostile Governments that will bring about a peace. In fact, every branch of the army is in favor of peace. The privations of a campaign in a foreign land are far more serious than was anticipated by many who entered the service, and now that they have suffered much from disease and have met the enemy, they sigh heavily for their homes and friends. But for myself I feel determined to give myself no uneasiness and to hold on patiently to the end, although my business at home needs my attention very much, and the very desponding, depressed state of feelings on the part of my wife arouses my anxiety, yet I will pass through the whole service with the heart and bearing of a soldier.

There is much speculation throughout the army as to what movement will be next made by the army. Tis reported here on what is regarded as reliable authority, that Genl. St. Anna[31] is at St. Louis Potosi, with about 12 or 14,000 men and placing that place in a state of defense as if he anticipated an attack upon it from our army, and the reports are that the Mexicans are raising an army of 30 or 40,000 men. This does not look like they intended suing for peace. It is about 350 miles from here to St. Louis Potosi through the mountains to Saltillio and thence much of the road passes over arid plains destitute of water, and it will be a most difficult mater for an army to pass from Saltillio to St. Louis Potosi, and that expedition cannot be undertaken without a large army and well apportioned train and ample supplies. In fact it is the universal opinion here amongst military men that an expedition to St. Louis Potosi ought not to be undertaken,—that it would be much less expensive in men and in money to take Vera Cruz than to take St. Louis.

There is a general impression here now that the next movement of our army will be to Tampico, and that the expedition will be put under the command of some other Genl. than Taylor. I have no doubt but you will see a settled course of attack upon Genl. Taylor by all the administration prints throughout the Union, charging him with mismanagement, etc. His fame and success is giving great uneasiness to the administration and they will now feel more anxiety to cut Taylor off, than to put an end to the war.

His movement upon Monterey and his success when truly represented is a most brilliant affair for he was most poorly supplied with transportation and could on[ly] bring up here about 6,000 men, officers and all, and but a small park of artillery and a very limited supply of provisions. Still he succeeded in taking one of the strongest fortified towns in Mexico and overcoming an army much larger than his which was fort[fie]d and behind the very strongest entrenchments. I regard the success at Monterey as far more signal and on a much larger scale than the battles at Palo Alto and at Ressica de la Palma and it is so regarded here by our millitary men. The whole effective force of Genl. Taylor on the morning of the battle including officers and all was 6,200 and the enemy had near 10,000 and upwards of 40 pieces of cannon, while we had less than half that number. They abundantly supplied with ammunition and our supply very limited and our provisions still more limited.

Under all the circumstances a great victory was gained with comparatively speaking very limited means and a small force.

[31]Santa Anna.
[32]Tamaulipas.

Nov. 3d.

The report to day from St. Louis Potosi is that about one half of the army at that place was in favor of making St. Anna Dictator and the other half opposed to it and that he and the army had gone to Mexico to settle the differences there. Should this news be correct the Enemy are in a still more distracted State and will not be able to concentrate an army any where but at the City of Mexico. It is believed here upon the best information that can be had that there are at Tampico 4 or 5,000 troops and that the fortifications at that point are very strong. But should an army of 6,000 men march upon that place it will certainly fall. It is most true that the Mexicans will not fight in the open field and that even behind walls and in forts they soon give up if attacked with spirit. Genl. Patterson is a man for show and parade and although he may be brave yet you will see that if he has a separate command he [will] not distinguish himself, besides he has not force of character with the army. It would be a great misfortune to the army and to the country should Genl. Taylor be displaced or superceeded in the command, as he is considered brave to a proverb and a fortunate commander and carries great moral weight with him in the army.

12. MONTEREY, November 9, 1846.

As the mail leaves here once a week, and tomorrow is the day for its departure I must write you a few lines, that you and my Aunt may know that my health continues to be excellent, and that I am yet at this place with my Regt. awaiting the orders of our General. I have had so much business to crowd on me to day that I have been cut out of the time I intended to appropriate to writing to you. But I must write even if it should be brief. The armistice of Genl. Taylor was promptly disapproved of at Washington and the previous orders to him reiterated, which was to *advance*. Genl. Taylor has sent a notice to the officer commanding at St. Louis Potosi, informing him that our Government had disapproved of the armistice and that it was at an end. So that now I may say that hostilities have begun again. The armistice really was of as much or more service to our army than to the enemy, as it was impossible for Genl. Taylor to get supplies of subsistence and ammunition here sufficient to begin a march even on Saltillio in less than eight weeks,—for he had moved his army here with very limited means of transportation and with but little subsistence and not much ammunition. But so great was his anxiety to move forward that he really put too much to hazard in coming to this place without more means of transportation. There has been a most shameful remissness [?] in the Quartermaster's department in not supplying Genl. Taylor with the means of transportation as will fully appear when the matter shall be investigated. He has not now the means to move forward as all our provisions (except what beef we get from the Mexicans) are drawn by wagons from Carmago, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. Genl. Wool has reached Monclova with his division and has written to Genl. Taylor that he cannot move on Chihuahua, as it will be impracticable for him to do so, therefore I conjecture that he will move down to Saltillio and unite with and co-operate with Genl. Taylor in future movements. Tomorrow Genl. Worth moves off to Saltillio with 800 men, to take possession of that place which will offer no resistance. Genl. Taylor will go there too for the purpose of informing himself as to the practicability of moving on St. Louis Potosi. If he should conclude not to advance on that place and I think he cannot with the men and means at his command, he will move in the direction of Tampico and co-operate with Genl. Patterson in an expedition to that place. All yet is in

doubt and unsettled as to the future movements of the army. Genl. Taylor is the safest Genl. now in Mexico and I prefer to be with him above any who are here. He has experience, good sense, a good military man and prudent, and withal a most kind, amiable and excellent gentleman. He will not foolishly put to hazard his army for the sake of making fame for himself. Most of the other high in rank officers are out here on a political tour to gain reputation to give them importance when they shall return home and they will look to no other consideration than their own distinction. They are all jealous of each other and are constantly backbiting each other, and all these Democratic Gen's, and Col's, and Major's and officer's [*sic*] and men are striking at Genl. Taylor whom they fear may be taken up for the Presidency and whose fame they are now jealous of. I feel myself not safe amongst men who seem to have no other object here but to advance the political party to which they owe their elevation. And they will give no quarters to a Whig if he should fall in their power. I have no confidence in either Genl. Paterson or Genl. Pillow or Genl. Quitman. I have seen enough of them to be well satisfied that all their sence [*sic*] of justice and ambition lies in advancing the interests of their party and gaining some capital for themselves, and any poor Whig who fell under their power would fare badly. They are all men of small minds and of contracted and selfish views, and will never distinguish themselves unless by *accident*. To be commanded by Pillow is bad enough for me, yet to bear his attempts to injure or mortify me will be hard indeed, but I shall bear with it until my term of service shall expire and then I shall be free to make some of these minions of party feel me. I have hope that I will not be separated from the army under the immediate command of Genl. Taylor and if it should be so I shall not fear their injustice or their attempts to injure me.

The President has required Genl. Taylor to employ Pillow and Shields and Patterson and has intimated to him that he wished an expedition set on foot to Tampico, to be under the management of Patterson, Pillow and Shields to be his coadjutors, and Genl. Taylor will feel disposed as any Genl. should to favour the views and wishes of the President, and if he finds he cannot march on St. Louis Potosi,—the expedition to Tampico will be set on foot, and Genl. Taylor will move with such portion of the army as can be spared from here, by the way of Lanares and Victoria and cooperate with Genl. Patterson who will move from Carmago with the main body destined for Tampico and may form a conjunction at Victoria. Or Genl. Taylor may place himself in such a position so as to cooperate with Patterson if necessary, or sustain the force here if necessary. I consider the instructions from Washington so far as I am informed of them calculated to cramp and to cripple Genl. Taylor. He has been badly treated by the Quartermaster's Dept. Had he been supplied with transportation he could have entered Monterey by the 1st of August at the furthest. It is reported that there are about 5,000 men at Tampico, which place is distant from here 400 miles, it is near the same distance from Carmago. Genl. St. Anna is at St. Louis Potosi with about 1,500 men and is said to be fortifying that place, and if so he does not intend to give us battle in the open field, but will post himself in forts and fortified towns. The route from Saltillio to St. Louis Potosi is about 300 miles and much of the way is barren and badly watered, only supplied by ponds and tanks which can be easily drained and we may expect much difficulty in making that march on account of the scarcity of water.

The route to Tampico from here is through a fine country, fertile and well watered, and no difficulty will be experienced on that route. I hear by a letter from my wife that you contemplate a visit to Tennessee this fall and if so you may be there now, for I have had no letter from you

for 2 weeks. I should rejoice to meet you at my home, but that pleasure must be denied me now.

This is a most pleasant and healthy country and the whole army here have fine health with the exception of chills and fevers, which are mild and are caused by the change of weather and the exposure of camp life. I have lost eight of those who were wounded in the battle, the remainder of the wounded are fast recovering and some have been discharged and are on their way home. Nothing would be more agreeable to the whole army than the news of peace. All are tired of this country and would rejoice at the prospect of a return to their homes. But I think peace will not be made soon, as Mexico will not submit to the terms which our Government will impose. They cannot submit to be deprived of California after the loss of Texas, and nothing but the conquest by us of their Capitol will force them to such a humiliation. They will give us more trouble than heretofore. The invasion and conquest of so large a portion of their territory will unite them and they will feel the necessity of union and that they are fighting for their homes. But we are now into the war and we must fight on until our enemy will agree to satiate the appetite of our President for new domains.

I am much pleased with my acquaintance with Genl. Worth, who seems to have taken a particular fancy to me. I find and have made many very agreeable acquaintances in the army. I am now daily engaged in drilling my Regt. which I have under very good discipline, although it is now cut down by deaths and discharges to about 500 officers and men. It acquired a good name in the battle and is regarded by all as a tried Regt. and to be relied on in an emergency.

13. Camp Allen, Near Monterey, Mexico, December 7, 1846.

Since the battle of Monterey I have written several letters to you, not less than three, but I do not remember the number. I also wrote one (not a very short one) to Col. John Campbell, and may have given some details not written to you. I hope you have seen that letter. For many weeks past we have had no occurrence of interest, nothing but the daily rounds of camp duty and a stationary camp life is exceedingly monotonous and wearisome. I have I may say never for a moment faltered in the discharge of my duties, being very strict myself in conforming in all things to the army regulations, a copy of which I have as well as Scotts discipline (the latest edition) and I have given them much of my time. I am very familiar with company and regimental drill and exercise my Regt. daily Sundays not excepted, which is allotted to *inspection*. I am also familiar with the regulations of the army and the rules and articles of war. I have never slept away from my command, but *one* night since I left New Orleans, and then I visited Matamoras to see Genl. Taylor on business. I think I may boast that no officer in the army of any rank is more attentive to his duties than I am. I write of myself, but I need not apologize to you for it. Genl. Taylor has determined on a movement south along the base of the *Siera Madre* to the East to Lanares and Victoria, and he leaves here in a few days with Genl. Twiggs' division and Genl. Quitman's Brigade and some few companies of dragoons and riflemen. The whole force will amount to upwards of 2000 men. I know not the design of this move and have no probable conjecture as all is speculation relative to it. It may be to take possession of the Province of Tanaulipass [*sic*], and open a communication along the base of the *Siera Madre* to Tampico, and he may intend to explore and satisfy himself whether there is a practicable route to St. Louis Potosi or to the City of Mexico from Tampico. Genl. Wool has been ordered to march his force to Parras a fine town situated in the great grain district, on

the road to Durango about 80 miles from Saltillio, and the report in camp is that he has already reached Parras and took 1000 sacks of flour destined for St. Louis Potosi. Thus the whole of North Mexico is now subjugated I may say the states of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Chihauhua, Santa Fe,[33] Neuvo Lean,[34] North Calafornia and Monclovas[35] are over run by our arms. I am of the opinion that, we will not get another fight out of these Mexicans, until our army marches upon some of the large cities towards the capitol. It is believed that Genl Santa Anna is at St. Louis Potosi with a large army, at least 25,000 but he will not venture to meet the Americans in the field. Your letter of the 24th October was received a few days ago, and I agree with your views fully that this country should not have been invaded by so small a force. Had there been 2000 more men here on the 21st Sept. the town could have been taken by investing it without the loss of a single man. They had no provisions laid up in store for a siege and I think it probable that they will never be found able to stand a siege of a few weeks in any of their fortified towns. They have no salt provisions and depend alone upon cattle driven in from the range to sustain an army. I am now much engaged in putting my command in condition for the march, getting them cloathed, etc. It is about 100 miles to Lanares and 200 miles to Victoria from here, and although we will have pleasant weather for marching, it is a long march for troops on foot. The weather here yet has been as mild as your summers at Abingdon, the sun is very hot during the day, but the nights are cool and vegitation is still going on, many fields of corn are quite green yet and blossoms are abundant. Nor has there been a rain since the night of the 21st of Sept. heavy enough to wet the ground one inch deep. The springs of water run flush and pure but warm. I have drank no water fresh from the fountain in this region but what would be called by you warm water, yet after standing in the shade or through the night it becomes cool and very pleasant. The air is generally colder than the fountains of water. I wrote you that the mountain scenery here is the finest I ever saw. No part of the Allegheny is to compare with it either in abruptness or in hight, the tops terminating in cones and peaks, constantly exhibiting a cloudlike appearance. Although this is the finest soil and climate joined I have any knowledge of yet it never will be much of a country while occupied by the present race. They are all semi Indians and must in a short time give place to the civilization of North America or North Europe. I had a letter from my wife from Nashville, she was on a short visit there about the 9th Novr. I regretted to learn that you had had the trouble of a trip to Knoxville to meet Virginia and was disappointed in not meeting with her,—she not being sufficiently restored to health to go on. I feel very proud of the present of your sword, now that I have had the chance to do something that makes me in some small degree worthy of it. I hope if you have sent it to Tennessee, it will not be sent to me here, for I fear it may be lost on the way. I have an excellent field blade, well suited to my arm, and an additional sword would be an incumbrance here. I wrote to James Campbell today and requested him to say for me through the papers at Nashville that I would not be a [candidate] for Governor or member of Congress at the next election. When I get through this service I wish to go home and attend to my private business. I would willingly continue in the army had I a permanent command and of the rank I think I am entitled to, but I know Mr. Polk would not appoint me to any thing and I will not engage in the volunteer service. It is too much trouble and responsibility for the honor. He that undertakes to command a volunteer

[33]Santa Fe.
[34]Nuevo Leon.
[35]Monclova.

Regt. will have his hands full. In the volunteer service the officers are constantly subjected to a public opinion even in camp, which has an influence upon him [*sic*] in spite of all the regulations of the army. The soldiers are writing home constantly and can annoy an officer very much and then when the short term of service is over he goes back to a society composed in part of his soldiers, but in the Regular Army it is very different, no opinions of theirs of their officers goes to the states nor has it any influence upon them. They are but machines and obey implicitly without murmur. Hence it is an impossible task to drill and discipline an army of volunteers like the Regular Army. My Regt. has fine character with Genl. Taylor and the whole army for its good demeanor and its being under good command, and although it is well drilled for volunteers, yet it is far behind the regular Corps, in drill and neatness and economy, etc. But at Monterey the volunteers fought as well as the regulars and really did more, for at the North East end of the town the fortified works that were taken was done by volunteers,—still I would much prefer to command *Regulars*. I will write you on the march, at Lanares and at Victoria. I shall be anxious to hear of your safe return to Abingdon and of your and the health of my dear aunt. Direct to me "of the 1st Ten. Regt. Army of Occupation Mexico," and the letters will be given the proper destination,—pay the postage,—they will not be forwarded to me unless some friend should pay the postage and send them on.

14. CAMP NEAR VICTORIA, MEXICO, January 2d, 1847.

Not yet having my mind relieved from the cares and troubles of a long march, I can only write you a short letter, that you and my dear Aunt may be informed that I am alive, in good health and have reached this place in safety with my command Genl. Taylor intended to have come here at the head of the army, but on the evening of the 17th Dec. after we reached Montemorales[36] about 60 miles from Monterey, an express overtook him from Genl. Worth from Saltillio, informing him that he (Worth) was threatened by a large force from St. Louis Potosi. Genl. Taylor instantly concluded to return and on the next morning set out with all his regular force, except one battery of 4 guns, left under command of Lieut. Thomas. Since he left we have not heard one word from him. At Montemorales, we were joined by the 2d Tennessee Regt. and Genl. Quitman was placed in command of the whole force left to march on Victoria. It was organized on the 18th Dec. into a field Division, composed of 2 brigades—the 1st composed of the 2 Tennessee Regts and placed under my command, Genl. Pillow having returned to New Orleans in bad health and the other made up of the Georgia and Mississippi Regts. and Baltimore Battallion, commanded by Col. Jackson of the Georgia Regt. Thus organized we proceeded on the march to this place. The whole command numbered about 2200 men and about 100 wagons and 300 pack mules The march was most successful, not having lost a man or a wagon on the whole way. The enemy had about 1000 cavalry at this (place) but on our approach they crossed the mountains to Tula at which place the Mexicans have a force of 5 or 6000 men. It is 90 miles distant from here, but the road is impassable for artillery and wagons. We left Monterey on the 14th Dec. and reached here on the 29th. Victoria is the capital of the State of Tamailepas [*sic*] has a population of 3 or 400, most of them very poor. Yet about the town there are some very good looking and intelligent peple. On the day of our arrival, the whole force marched into the main plaza of the town and had the American flag hoisted over the State house at a present arms. I am now encamped with the whole division 2 miles from town and in command of the

[36] Montemorelos or Monte Morelos.

camp, Genl. Quitman having taken his quarters in town with the artillery and a few companies for a gard. [*sic*] It is now most delightful summer weather here and I see them daily cutting and grinding sugar cane and ploughing and planting also. Nor can anything equal the fruits of this count[r]y—the orange and date. The whole course of our march from Monterey here was along the base of the great range of the Sierra Madre, never more than 5 or 6 miles distant, and every few miles passing the finest streams of water I ever beheld even more flush and pure than the streams of Washington Va in summer. But the count[t]ry is very thinly inhabited. Coidonto,[27], Lanares and Victoria have each a population of 3 or 4000, Ville Grand[28] and Hidalgo less than a 1000 each and but few settlements on the road between the towns, but the road was laid out [on] the high ground and the settlements are all on the streams and on lands that can be irrigated. In the rainy season this road would have been impassable on account of the many large creeks or small runs and no means of bridging or ferrying. The whole country from the Mountains to the Gulph is without large timber.

Genl. Patterson left Matamoras on the 20th Decr. with 3 regiments—2 Illinois foot and one Tennessee Cavalry,—in all about 1600 or 2000 men. He has also 2 companies of artillery. It was intended that the two forces should meet here about the same time, but Genl. P. will not be here before the 6th inst. He will be the general in command of this division, and what will be done I have no conjecture. It is thought we will pass the mountains and move on Tula and attack the force there. I have no acquaintance with Genl. Patterson, but from what I hear of him he will not do for a commander. He is vain, proud, self conceited and in military matters decidedly ignorant, so I think he will not do at all. Genl. Quitman is weak, vain, ignorant, ambitious to do something to signalize himself, and has the supreme contempt of nearly every officer in the command. Nor is he liked by the men. He will not do at all for a commander. I deeply regretted to be separated from Genl. Taylor but I could not help it I have no confidence in Patterson or Quitman and you need not be surprised at the news of disaster under their command. The army is very healthy and this is the proper season for campaigning in this country. The fall and winter is healthy and dry and the waters low and passable. I hope Genl. Pillow will soon return to his command for I have no desire to occupy a position I am placed in by accident. If the President gave me the command of a Brigade I should command it with pleasure but I prefer my own Regt. under present circumstances. I have had no letter from you since about the 20th Octo. and now that we have no way open to the sea I know not when I shall hear from you.

[Postscript.] You will direct to me in the army commanded by Genl. Patterson at Victoria Mexico. It will then follow me. David Cummings is with the 2d Regt. from Ten. is the Lieut. Col.—is in good health a very clever fellow, very amiable, but no part of a military man.

15. Camp Lagonna de Puerta, Tampico, January 26, 1847.

I arrived here on the 24th inst. from Victoria after a very fatiguing march and am now encamped with my Regiment ten miles north of Tampico. The health of the army is very good, and all is now preparation for the expedition to Vera Cruz. Genl. Scott is daily expected at Tampico, and until his arrival nothing can be definitely counted on. Genl. Taylor received his despatches at Victoria, and immediately returned with a small force to Monterey, where he will be continued in command. It is now

[27]Cadereita(?).
[28]Villa Grande.

understood here that Genl. Scott will have a force of about 12000 men for the Vera Cruz expedition. He will have Genl. Quitmans Brigade composed of the Georgia, Alabama Regts. and Baltimore Battallion;— Genl. Pillows Brigade composed of the three Tennessee Regts., Genl. Shields Brigade in part composed of two Illinois Regts., and between 4 and 5000 regulars. Genl. Worth and Genl. Twiggs will be in command of the Regulars. I can give you no reliable views about the expedition, as it is all new to me and I am going ahead to any point I may be ordered, without question.

I was in Tampico a few hours on yesterday and found it quite a pleasant town, more American than any I have seen in Mexico, with a population of 4 or 5000. It is well stocked with goods, and eadibles [*sic*] and makes a soldier from the interior feel as if he had got back to his own land. The country from Victoria to this place is very thinly settled, being very dry and destitute of water at this season of the year, and we had to make long marches to reach water. We however got on well and had no mishaps and the command is in good health and will do good service before the wall of St. Juan Ulloa.[39] My health is excellent, and I am more able to stand the camp life better than I have been in several years. I have received several letters from you and one lately from my friend Col. John Campbell. I thank you both sincerely. Present him with my sincere affection and that I shall be glad to hear often from him. Tell my dear Aunt that I often think of her when I behold the innumerable curiosities which the vegetable kingdom of this country produces. I know how well she would enjoy the sight of varieties of the cactus, the Palms, and other plants the names of which I am not acquainted with, and then the orange, the date, the plantin and Banana are here in great perfection. I have seen a thorn and curiosities that I would like to transmit home and to my Aunt, but I can do no more than to admire them and regret that I have to leave them behind.

16. Camp Near Tampico, Mexico, February 19th, 1847.

Your letter of the 15th January was received today. I have had no letter of a later date than the 12th December. How it is that my letters have miscarried I cannot conjecture.

Genl. Scott arrived here today from Brasos Sant Iago and has issued orders for an immediate embarkation of the force at this place for Vera Cruz. There are not at this place enough transports for the whole force here, but transports are hourly expected so that in three or four days it is believed we shall all be off. I look upon this expedition to Vera Cruz as having began too late and that the troop[s] will be in very great danger from the climate of that most sickly place. We cannot expect to be on land at Vera Cruz before the 10th of March and should the place take from four to six weeks to reduce it we will find that sickness will begin it[s] dreadful ravages in our ranks. But we have no alternative but to go ahead and stand the utmost hazard of the game. I fear that there is such a thirst for military distinction amongst our Generals, that they will be willing to make any sacrifice of human life to gratify their ambition. Vera Cruz is a most sickly place, being afflicted with yellow fever nine months in the year and the vomita as malignant nearly as that of Africa. I would not have you think that I am desponding—on the contrary I have constantly a fine flow of spirits and rarely feel the least depression of spirits. From what I learn Genl. Scott calculates on reducing Vera Cruz in a short time, and then march on Jalappa,[40] Puebla and the city of

[39]San Juan de Ulua.
[40]Jalapa.

Mexico, so that if he succeeds in his plans we shall have some fighting before walled towns, besides that of Vera Cruz.

In relation to the claim which Col. Davis[41] has set up for the Mississippi in taking the fort No. 1 at the battle of Monterey. It is most presumptuous, and as soon as I have time to devote to that subject, I will expose his false statements. When the division of Genl. Butler was drawn up in line of battle about one mile from the town fronting the town,—Genl. Hamers Brigade on the right and to the west, Genl. Quitmans on the left and to the east,—The Ten. Regt. on the right of Genl. Quitmans Brigade,—while in this position we heard the fire of artillery which was followed by a heavy fire of musketry, towards the east end of the town on the north front opposite to the extreme left of the Division, the Miss. Regt. being on the extreme left. The order was given to me by the aid[e] of Genl. Quitman (Lieut. Nickols)[42] to move my regiment by the left flank to the support of the troop that were engaged, where we heard the firing. I immediately faced the Regt. by the left flank and marched past [the] front of the Miss. Regt. and took the road which led in the direction of the firing. Just as the head of my line entered the road and before the whole Regt. had passed the Miss. Regt. a part of the 4th infantry rushed into the road ahead of me and caused a small delay until they had got into the road. I led my Regt. and followed on the heels of the three companies of the 4th infantry, followed by the Miss. Regt. all marching in line of two files and at a rapid step. In the rapid march the line was very much extended and probably covered one half more space, than it would in a slow march and on parade. The fire upon the head of the line of the 4th infantry caused them to file to the right and out of the road which led in the direction of the fort, but to the right of it about 35 yards. Their movement to the right, placed me in full view of the work and gave me a clear field, having no orders but what I have named above, and not seeing Genl. Quitman I moved on steadily but rapidly down the road until I perceived that the road passed the fort to the right. I left the road and took a straight course towards it through the bushes which were from 2 to 3 feet high, followed by my Regt. and on arriving within one hundred yards of the north west angle of the fort, I left the head of line and ordered the companies to file out to the left, so as to form the line to the left and in front of the north side of the fort; the head of the line stopped and without orders the whole line as it was forming or moving out to form began to fire. I had ordered a charge, but could not be heard for the firing or if heard was not obeyed, and I instantly ordered the firing to stop and to charge the fort. I passed along the line with great rapidity calling loudly to stop the firing and to rush upon the fort. I was seconded in this by my Lieut. Col. and my Adjutant. The firing was stopped and in a few second[s] I got the whole line under way in the charge. It was a raw[?] and a very irregular line, for the firing was so destructive as to break the lines and to produce confusion. I still had no orders from any quarter. I saw Genl. Quitman while I was rallying my Regt. at work in the Miss. which by this time had come down and taken position on the right of my Regt., to the left of the Miss. not up to the right of mine and as I think in rear and lapping over on my line, and they were firing. So soon as I got my Regt. to move off, the Miss. Regt.

[41]The controversy between the First Tennessee Regiment and the Mississippians under Colonel Jefferson Davis is detailed in *Reminiscences of a Campaign in Mexico*, chapter XVIII. For accounts of the battle representing the point of view of Colonel Davis and the Mississippi Regiment see Alfriend, F. A., *The Life of Jefferson Davis* (1868), chapter III, and *Jefferson Davis . . . A Memoir by His Wife* (1890), volume I, chapters XXIV, XXV.

[42]W. A. Nichols.

moved also and we rushed simultaneously to the charge. But you will observe that I had taken my position first in front of the north front of the fort, my right resting at about 95 yards from the North west corner of the fort and the line extending thence to the east slightly obliking [*sic*] from the fort so that the extreme left was about 130 years from the fort, and along on this alignment lay my killed and wounded, and the killed were buried on the ground where they fell and there are now their graves and bones. I did not dismount until I approached near the fort seeing that I could not pass the ditch on horseback and when I dismounted many of my Regt. were on the walls firing at the retreating Mexicans and were the first to enter the work. When I dismounted many of my Regt. were behind me, and it was there that I called to them to come on or follow me, and when I entered the fort many of my Regt. and a large number of the Miss. Regt. came up and passed on. I passed through to the large tannery or fortified house and was giving some directions to some men who were firing from the top of it when my horse was brought to me and I galloped down into town where a portion of my Regt. had gone. I did not enter the tannery. It was inside of that building that Col. McCling[43] was shot, and where the prisoners were taken. I did not see Col. Davis during the fight; he was on foot and in citizens dress. Col. McCling was also on foot. Nor did I receive any order from Genl. Quitman until after the fort was taken. He says he gave an order to Lieut. Col. Anderson, who was on the left of the Regt. and near to him, to charge. Col. Anderson says that when spoken to by Genl. Quitman the Regt. was actually moving and under way in the charge. After the fort was taken the two Regt.[s] became very much intermingled and the onward move into the town was irregular and intermixed.

Col. Davis's and my Regt. were united in one Brigade at Camargo. On the day of our first march together my Regt. moved off in front. We alternated each day throughout the march to Monterey, but when drawn up in line of battle, I was on the right, and Genl. Butler misapplies terms, when he states that the Miss. Regt. being [*sic*] in front. When the line should be faced to the left they would be in front, but I immediately filed or marched past them and became the front or leading Regt. [the whole Brigade marching by the left flank.][44] Nothing is more ridiculous and untrue than the insinuation of Col. Davis that he passed through or by my Regt. He says he stopped and fired 10 minutes. I am confident my Regt. did not make [a][45] pause more than 5 or 7 minutes and of course my rear came up to the alignment as soon as the front of the Miss. Regt. It is a miserable falsehood that the shot of the enemy passed over the heads of the Miss. Regt. and took effect on the main army in its rear. No portion of any force was in rear of the Miss. Regt. The Miss. Regt. formed to the right and west of mine and were rather opposite to the west front of the fort but not directly before it. The universal sentiment of the army is against the presumptious claim of Col. Davis. Col. Davis says that his Regt. being youngest in service was thrown forward on account of its merits. Now there was not a volunteer Regt. in service but would have contested with the Miss. Regt. for precedence on that ground; and most of them were far better drilled than them. But Genl. Taylor has said in a letter to the Col. of the Ala. Regt. that the reason Col. Davis was taken forward was because his Regt. was armed with rifles a desirable weapon, "and it (the Miss. Regt.) came to the country under *special instructions* from the *War Department* to *report immediately* at the *Head Quarters* of *the Army*." So Davis and Genl. Taylor are

[43]Alexander R. McClung, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Mississippi Regiment.
[44]Interlined.
[45]Interlined.

at issue as to a fact. But Davis is the son in law of Genl. Taylor and the latter is very much under his influence and is and has been disposed to do everything he can for his advancement. But enough of this. I will so soon as I have time make a statement for the public which will be corroborated by all my officers which you will see. Genl. Scott has been very busy since he came, and this evening the 20th has left for the island of Lobos where he will start the convoy. I understand that 5000 will go forward to effect a landing and that the Tennessee Brigade will be in that number. My health is good. My horses are fat and fine, the two I brought from Ten. My servant Joseph Cox is a raw Irishman that I employed on the Gulph coming over to Brasos in June. He is faithful but awkward.

Our food is generally coarse, being coffee, hard bread and fried bacon. When near such a town as this we get vegetables from the market, and have had here, fine potatoes, lettuce the finest I ever saw and fish; beef is abundant but not first rate.

February 21st.

I see to day that Genl. Saint Anna has issued a proclamation, in which he represents his army in a most miserable condition, without money to buy provisions, without cloathing, and without a supply of the munitions of war, and he offers to give up the command. If the picture that is drawn in his proclamation be true, we will have no fighting for some time as the Mexican army is in no condition to take the field and will not be in some time.

Vera Cruz is obliged to fall an easy prey and we shall march on Mexico almost without oposition. The troops are embarking to day, Genl. Twiggs Division going first, Genl. Pillows Brigade next, Genl. Quitmans next and Genl. Shields last. Col. Gates of the regular army remains here in command with the new Regt. from Louisiana, the Baltimore Battallion, a company or two of regulars for the garrison. The climate here is a perpetual summer day being as warm as mid-summer in Ten. If we can reduce Vera Cruz in a short time and move out 50 of 100 [miles] towards Mexico we will be in a high healthy country and as safe from disease as in your Virginia Mountains. We may have a dangerous time to go home as we will pass Vera Cruz and the Gulph and New Orleans in the sickly season. Give my love to my dear Aunt and to Col. John Campbell. I am your devoted nephew.

[Postscript.] My Regt. will number for field service about 350 men and are stout, in good condition and will give a good account when called on.

22nd February 47.

The weather has been so windy that none of the troop[s] at this place have yet embarked and I fear that all will not be off for two weeks. Genl. Scott has gone to Lobos. The whole convoy will move at once for that Island. No news, all very busy preparing for the expedition and drilling daily very hard, so as to have the men fit for fighting.

I have received no letters from my wife since I have been here. The last letters I have from Ten. are dated about the 10th of Dec. 46. Your letter of the 14th Jany. 47 has come safe to hand, but no letters from my home.[46]

17. Bay of Anton Lizardo, March 6th, 1847.

I write you a few lines in haste, that you may be advised of my whereabouts. I left Tampico on the 1st inst on board the Steamer Alabama,

[46]A crude map of the battles of Monterey is drawn on one of the pages of this letter.

with 7 Companies of my Regt. We are still on board and at anchor here, where we arrived on the 4th inst. We had a very pleasant passage from Tampico to this place, which is 8 or 9 miles south of Vera Cruz and in sight of that place and the formidable castle of St. Juan de Ulloa. This place is near the island of Anton Lizarda,[47] affords fine anchorage for our vessels, where are now lying at Anchor 60 or 70 ships laden with troops and more hourly expected. Genl. Scott is here, and is engaged to day making a reconnoissance of the shore for the purpose of selecting a place for landing. We have here Genls. Worth, Twiggs, Pillow and I should have first named Mjr. Genl. Patterson, who came on the (Ala) [sic] with me here and has been very agreeable. Genls. Quitman and Shields are hourly expected with their commands. We shall have here about 10,000 effective men to invest and to take Vera Cruz with. Genl. Scott is going about the work with great system and I have no doubt will be successful. The fleet here now presents the most imposing appearance. Sacrificios is between this and the city about 3 miles from the castle. Green Island is directly east of Sacrificios one or two miles—at these two places and at this, our blockading squadron anchors. The particular place of our landing is not yet pointed out. Nor can we tell whether the landing will be disputed. No doubt we shall have hot work before the city. I hope it will be reduced in a few weeks, for the yellow fever sets in by the 15th April, when we will have to fly from disease. The Mexican force is believed to be 5 or 6,000 in the city and castle. Our force will be about 10,000.

We have news that Genl. Taylor has had a battle with St. Anna and has whiped him. The news comes through the Mexicans, and the report of the fight is favorable to St. Anna who reports his loss at 1,000 and Genl. Taylor's at 2,000, but says he retired for provisions for his men. This news is calculated to inspire our force here with great enthusiasm and confidence. You will have heard all about the fight by Genl. Taylor's own reports before you get this. I have no doubt but Genl. Taylor was successful in the fight and we will be so here, but some lives will be lost and no one can tell who may fall. My men are in good health and spirits and when all together I shall have about 400 officers and men and very effective fellows. I hope we shall succeed in reducing the place before the yellow fever sets in, which is about the 15th April. If Genl. Taylor has had the fight reported and succeeded he will be the next President and Genl. Scott will be nowhere. If Taylor should be defeated, Scott will be received [?].[48] If Taylor has succeeded, his force being *entirely* volunteers, it will prove the efficiency of that force. I left my horses at Tampico to be brought on here on a vessel which was to bring the horses of Genl. Patterson. They have not yet arrived. I hope they will come safe, as they were fine horses and I cannot walk well.

I left my servant at Tampico sick and hired another who is with my horses.

I have not kept a journal. I did not begin it at first and have not had the resolution to take it up. You shall hear from me when I have some news.

18. CAMP NEAR VERA CRUZ, March 20, 1847.

I have had too much to do to compose my mind sufficiently to write to you, and to day I only intend to let you know where I am and that I am in good health. On the ninth the army debarked about 3 miles south of Vera Cruz opposite the island of Sacrificios without oposition. It was a most magnificent sight to see such a flotilla of small boats making to the

[47]Anton Lizardo.
[48]Ruined (?) The reading is doubtful.

shore fill[ed] with men and their bristeling bayonets. Genl. Worth's Brigade entered the surf boats first and made the lands, the boats returned for Genl. Pillow's Brigade and I had the honor of leading that Brigade to the shore escorting my Major Genl. Patterson. (By the way I came from Tampico on the steamer Ala. with Genl. Patterson and I became well acquainted with him and I am disposed to change my opinion of him, he is agreeable, polite and clever, and has much more capacity than I had attributed to him, he has but little military experience, but he seems to demean himself well and particularly to me does he bear himself properly. And I may say that Genl. Pillow is more agreeable than I expected and tries hard to be agreeable to me, yet he has no military capacity, and can only signalize himself by his valour which he may possess sufficiently. He is light, impetuous and with but little judgment and no skill or experience, and often renders himself rediculous, yet I am disposed to be friendly with him and to sustain him so long as he is disposed to do justice to me and to appear friendly.[)] But to return. On shore I arrived in the dark and lay on the left of Genl. Worth's Brigade on our arms all night. Next morning early we began to move so as to get around the town. Soon my Regt. was thrown forward and reached an old ruin which could have been defended by a few men with great effect, from thence we were ordered to proceed and takek the magazine which is about 2½ miles from the wall of the town. We passed forward and found it had been evacuated, but got about 75 English shells and some boxes of Rockets. There we rested for the day a few shots having been fired at us with escapets[49] at a long distance. The other regts. of volunteers moved on and became engaged in a skirmish with small bodies of the enemy but little damage was done. So we moved on and placed our line entirely around the City—in the order of Genl. Worth's Brigade first, Genl. Pillow's, Genl. Quitman's, Genl. Shields', and Genl. Twigg's on the Jallappa road and to the beach to the north of the town. My Regt. is stationed on the rail Road and the Medillon road to prevent ingress or egress along those routs—next in importance as roads to the Jallappa road. We have now encamped along the lines about 12,000 men, but our movements are necessarily slow, for since we landed, we have had a north wind which prevented any communication with the shipping for a week, since then there has been heavy ordinance and stores landed and provisions and Quartermaster's stores landing, and we have been engaged preparing to plant some batteries. This work until yesterday was confined to Worth['s] Brigade. Genl. Pillow's Brigade has a work now in operation so we hope in 3 or 4 day[s] to have some heavy morters throwing shells into the town and castle yet I must say that but a small portion of the heavy morters and cannon ordered by Genl. Scott has yet arrived, but looked for dayly. There are here now 10 morters 10 inches diameter and 4 Twenty four pounder cannon.

It will require a much larger siege train to compel the castle to surrender. I have no doubt but that Vera Cruz is one of the strongest places in the world—perhaps second only to Gibralter. I cannot now describe to you the town and castle, but the castle is situated in the bay in front of the town about 800 yards from the town—the water between the town and castele deep enough for the largest vessels.

The town is surrounded by a wall 16 feet high and 3 feet thick, with 90 guns in batteries along the wall. The country rises from the town an[d] is very broken in sand hills and as far out as our camp the sand hills are 150 feet high. The hills are barren, but along the small vallies a very dense thicket of small growth 15 or 20 feet high, makes it impassable except path[s] are choped out. I think we now have the town

[49]Escopeta, the name of a short carbine carrying a large bullet.

completely cut off, and if our navy would but do as well as the army they would soon have to capitulate for want of provisions.

But if they do not give up soon we will be throwing shells into them at a terrible rate. I saw Genl. Scott yesterday. He is very agreeable and kind and I am disposed to think he is managing this affair as well as it could be done by any one with his means. He is a noble gallant soldier and I am pleased with him. He has capacity and qualifications for so large and so complicated a command, and will I doubt not make it succeed. Vera Cruz in our possession and Mexico could do but little more as the ways will all be open to our arms to enter the heart of her dominions.

Genl. Scott says he will take the place with but little sacrifice of life and that he will then move out to Jallappa, which is the most healthy and delightful climate in Mexico. You will have heard before you get this of the great battle of Buenavista, fought by Genl. Taylor and Genl. Santa Anna near Saltillio. Old Zack is the most lucky man alive. He is the bravest of the brave—kind, good, clever fellow as lives—*a mighty good man*—but his excellence is to fight and Santa Anna forced him to fight, and he has fought like a bull dog and whiped him badly. His fame is now complete as the greatest military chieftan of the age and he will be the next President by acclamation. He will make a good President, and I am for him or for Scott or any Whig who may be our nominee.

It was a terrible battle. He went back expecting to have nothing to do, but his star is in the ascendant. He has had to do what Genl. Scott would have given a kingdom to have done. And what makes the affair more glorious is that 5,000 volunteers fought 20,000 Mexicans and killed and wounded 4,000, with a loss of 700. Will it ever be said again that volunteers cannot fight as well as Regulars?

The Regular Army are not pleased at the affair as it was won by volunteers alone. They will have to do something here, for the volunteers will eclipse them if they don't mind. I must say that Genl. Worth is moving with his brigade and daily gaining laurels. He has an advanced work to plant morters, on which the enemy have been firing for 4 or 5 day[s] and to day they have already discharged more than 150 shot and shells at it still it is prosecuted with unwavering firmness and will be ready by to night to plant the morters. No damage has yet been done to his command at the advanced work. I have had a few very large shells to fall near my lines and the fragments after bursting to tear the tents, yet no man of my Regt. has been hurt. One ball fell within 20 feet of me (a 24 pounder) but did no damage. But this firing of shells into an encampment is very alarming to the men. From the best information that can be had the force in the town and castle is 6 or 7,000, of which less than 3,000 are Regulars. The women and children have left the town, still they are getting scarce of provisions and would soon have to capitulate from hunger. Yet they shew no signs as every few minutes we are saluted by the sound of their cannon. Genl. Morales is in command, and is a brave Genl. and will hold out as long as possible. It is very warm here, the whole winter here being like midsummer in Ten. The sickly season does not set it until about the 1st of May, and I hope long before then, we will be at Jallappa or on our way to our homes. I hope the latter as I am very anxious to get home and give some attention to my business.

Present my truest love to my dear Aunt and remember me most affectionately to Col. John C. and all my friends about Abingdon.

19. CAMP WASHINGTON NEAR VERA CRUZ, March 28th, '47.

I can only write you a few lines in haste, to inform you that the fight here is at an end and that the Commander of the town of Vera Cruz and

Castle have entered into terms of capitulation and tomorrow at 10 Oclk A.M. they are to be surrendered up to us and the army to be marched out and lay down their arms and become prisoners of war. Although we made the landing here on the 9th inst, and the enemy commenced to fire upon us at long distance with their heavy artillery which was kept up irregularly all the time, yet we did not succeed in opening the first battery upon them until the 22d. On the 24th the 2d battery was got into operation. The first battery was planted by Genl. Worth's division and when opened consisted of 7 mortars of 10 inch calibre. The other battery consisted of 6 guns from the navy of large size—4 64 pounders and 2 32 pounders. After our battery began to fire it was returned with great spirit by the town and castle from near 100 guns, still our fire continued steady throwing every shell into the town and was kept up night and day. Our batteries were placed about 700 yards from the wall of the town. The navy guns were opened on the 24th and produced great effect upon the wall and in silencing two of the enemy's batteries which were operating very fiercely against us. This battery was manned and commanded by men and officers of the navy although constructed by the volunteers and my Regt. had an active part in it. This second battery was complete and the guns loaded ready to fire before it was discovered by the enemy such was the silence and secrecy observed in its construction, yet when unmasked it was on higher ground than the town and in full view some bushes prevented the discovery.

On the morning of the 26th at day light after a sure[50] fire of shell into the town, the Mexican commander sent out a white flag proposing to capitulate, and from that time until late last night the subject has been negotiating, but it is now understood to be settled. On tomorrow at 10 Oclock A.M. the whole force amounting to between 5 and 6,000, march out and lay down their arms and become prisoners of war, the town and castle of St. Juan De Ulloa to be given up to us and all the Govt. property of every kind. So that Vera Cruz and the castle are now *ours*. Our loss since we landed is about 16 killed and 25 wounded—only three officers—Capt. Albertes[51] of the infantry, Capt. Vinton of the artillery and Midshipman Shubrick of the navy have been killed. The loss on the part of the enemy is much greater but not yet ascertained the destruction of life to the population must have been very great as our bomb shells fell all over the town and no part of it escaped and I can see although I have not yet been in the town that the houses are much battered. The affair has been a brilliant one and eminently successful. The strongest place in North America has been taken by the skill and valour of our troops after a siege of two weeks and with a loss of killed and wounded of only about 40. We now have the key to the City of the Montezumas and can go there with little or no oposition. I think the Mexican govt. will now offer to make peace,—they cannot resist us and I think will not be able to raise another army in time to meet us before we shall be in the City of Mexico (I mean the American Army) for I now think my time of service will expire before the preparation can be made to march to the City of Mexico. I shall be glad when my time arrives to return home, and my whole command are anxious to get home. Mr. Polk will be deceived in his calculations that the volunteers now in service will re-enlist for the war—not one out of 100 will re-enlist. Genl. Scott has managed the affair here well and Genl. Worth has gained great eclat for his conduct in this whole affair. He is a very active and sprightly officer. I have found Genls. Patterson and Pillow very agreeable in all my intercourse

[50]Severe (?)
[51]Alburtis.

with them. But they [are] neither cut out for military men, particularly the latter. I have not been able here to signalize myself particularly, but have done as much as any officer of my grade. On the 29th at 1 oclock the whole force will march out and surrender their arms in the immediate presence of Genl. Worth's and Genl. Pillow's Brigades, on each side of them the whole force of the enemy is about 4,000. Since I wrote the above I have received your two letters of the 2d and 8th February and one from Col. John Campbell of the 3d Feby. I have no expectation of remaining in the army and have not given an intimation to any one since I entered the service that I desired an appointment in the army from Mr. Polk and I do not desire or expect one. I did signify through Col. Gentry when the war first broke out that I would accept an appointment in the line, in the army. He waved a decision and I have desired my friends since to make no application to him for me. I do not wish to remain in the army and will if I am permitted return home as soon as I can.

You will have heard of Genl. Taylor's great battle of Buenavista[52] with Genl. St. Anna. Now Taylor's fame is complete and his popularity will be as overwhelming as was Genl. Jackson's. I much fear that the adm. will excite a rivalry between Scott and Taylor and that they will sustain Scott a disposition to affiliate with the enemies *particularly* of Genl. Taylor. I hope this may not be so, but it matters not. Taylor is the people's man and he makes an impression on the soldiery. Genl. Scott makes no such impression as old Rough and Ready. And Scott will be able to make no shew against Taylor. I like Genl. Scott very well, but he is a very vain, and light man, but of great acquirements and genius, but too much effort to be agreeable to be popular, I[53] will never reach the Presidency, I predict.

March 29th—47.

I have just returned to camp with my Regt, having witnessed at a great distance, the ceremony of laying down their arms by the army of Very Cruz—about 5,000 in number, and as they marched off it seemed that the whole population of the city was moving off, being so many women along with the army. I had a poor chance to see any thing as I was ordered to remain with my Regt. Genl. Scott, and Genl. Worth and Genl. Pillow are here a sort of triumvirate and Scott is paying Polk for letting him come here in his notice of and putting forward Pillow on all occasions.

Scott is vain and to be reached by flattery which I will not plaster him with. I have seen him but once since I have been here and I care not whether I ever see him again.

I feel here as if I had no place, and I am [?] can bear with patience all that may occur in the next two months,—to be under Scott and Pillow longer I would be forced to resign. But I will hang on and do my duty. I have no chance to visit the City until it shall please Genl. Scott and Pillow to let me go and I will never ask that favor of them if I never enter the walls of Vera Cruz. I may not be able to give you any account of the city, on account of the *policy* of our Genls.

I hope soon to be discharged with my Regt. and I will return home and no inducement will take me into the army again.

20. Camp 45 Miles From Vera Cruz on the Road to the City of Mexico, April 13th, 1847.

The weather has been extremely hot and the service I have had to perform has made me both disinclined and unfit for writing to any one.

[52]February 22, 23, 1847.
[53]Evidently a slip for "and."

But tomorrow will be a day big with the fate of many a poor soldier and I will write you a few lines, not knowing what may happen to your affectionate nephew.

On the 8th inst. Gen. Twiggs marched off from Vera Cruz with about 2000 regulars, and on the 9th Genl. Pillow and Genl. Shields Brigade under Genl. Patterson march[ed] on the same route towards Jallapa. It was well understood that the enemy was in force and fortifying near this place. On yesterday Twiggs came up with the position of the enemy which is about three miles from this place, and concluded from their force and strength of opposition to fall back here and await the arrival of Pattersons division, which got here yesterday evening much worn out and fatigued with the march. An attack was concluded on by Gen. Twiggs who is in command (Genl. Patterson being very sick) on this morning at day light, but he was dissuaded from it for the purpose of resting the men and making a more perfect reconnoisance of the enemys position and works. That has been done to day and at day light we make the attack. Our effective force here does not exceed 5000 men. The Mexican force is represented to be 15,000 and in a fortified position which commands the road. Genl. Scott and Genl. Worth are at Vera Cruz and will not be up with us until it will be too late to profit by their skill and experience. I feel quite sure that it would be proper to wait the arrival of Scott and the additional force which he will bring with him, which would at least make the fight a lighter one, and victory more certain. But Twiggs now having a separate command and Pillow and Shields, are all anxious to strike some blow that will signalize themselves, in the absence of Scott and Worth, and they will attempt it tomorrow, and I think the chances are much against their success. A repulse ought to disgrace them, because the attack is to be made from an utter disregard of the exposure of the command and loss of life, solely to make some capital for themselves. I have no confidence in Twiggs' ability, no[r] have the intelligent officers of the army any confidence in him. Pillow is very light, and the affair on tomorrow will need a better head than any of those who are high in command. From all I can learn of the Enemys position it is very strong with a very large force, and we will be in great danger of a *repulse,* which will operate very injuriously on the future operations of this army, besides disgracing the troops. Santa Anna is said to be here, as is also Cannalizo,[54] La Vega and others of high renown, and they are prepared to make a very formidable resistance. In another day the whole of Worths division and Genl. Quitmans Brigade will be here and our force would be more than doubled. But delay might place others in command which is to be avoided by Twiggs, Pillow and Shields. Night before last we staid at the Peuenta del Rey[55] or Kings Bridge, where Santa Anna has a most beautiful residence. But we have found the whole country, every house and village from Vera Cruz to this place abandoned. The men are all with the army. There is more appearance of hostility here on the part of the population than any part of Mexico we have been in. And I think they will dispute every pass with us on the road to their capital. This road has been a much superior one to the Cumberland road, being much wider and the Bridges the best I ever saw but the face of the road is now much worn. The country is poor with a few fine streams at great distances apart. From the stream at the Kings bridge to this stream called (Plan del Rio) is 15 miles, and not any water on the road. (There is a little village here call[ed] Encero.)[56]

[54]Canalizo.

[55]Puente del Rey,—the name under the Spanish regime. It was now called Puente Nacional.

[56]Rio del Plan was the name of the stream; the village was called Plan del Rio. Encero, an estate belonging to Santa Anna, lay some distance beyond.

I find that there is not as much confidence in the troops as I would like to see and I have some fears as to the result of tomorrow. But I shall meet whatever occurs with the firmness I have exhibited on other occasions, trusting to a merciful Providence, my fate and destiny.

N. B. Genl. Patterson although very sick has taken the responsibility of stopping the attack until the arrival of Genl. Scott, which I think is entirely proper.

14th.

All well and waiting for Genl. Scott, the express leaves immediately—a day or two will tell some news.

PALM [*sic*] DEL RIO, 17th April, 1847.

The fight has not come off yet. It was delayed until Genl. Scott came up on the 15th and Genl. Worth with his division came up last night and tomorrow at dawn of day the fight begins. It is now well ascertained that Santa Anna is here and that his force is very large say 15000, and that his whole line is an entrenchment with numerous batteries and located in a strong mountain pass called the *pass* of the Sierra Gorda.[57] Twiggs is now near the rear of the enemy with Shields Brigade and in the morning will be joined by Worths Division. Pillows Brigade attacks the extreme left of their line in front and we shall have a hot place. If I shall be spared, you shall have from me a full report. Twiggs was attacked by the enemy to day, but he beat them off. They are evidently disposed to fight and with more spirit than heretofore. We shall have a hot day of it tomorrow and many lives will be lost. I can only say that I will not on tomorrow tarnish the fair name of our family or shade the name of Campbell. . . .

Col. J. E. Johnston formerly of Abingdon was badly wounded on the 1st days approach of Genl. Twiggs while he was reconnoitering the position of the enemy—his wound is not mortal.

21. PLAN DEL RIO, MEXICO, April 18, 1847.

The battle came off today and the enemy whole force surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Genl. Scott came up on the 15th and Worth with his Division got here night before last, but much fatigued and were rested yesterday. Yet the[y] did not get into the fight at all. Twiggs' Division and Shields' Brigade did the work. The[y] passed around the enemy with much difficulty and took position in his rear and completely cut off retreat, not however before Santa Anna had made his escape with 3000 cavalry. To day they stormed a commanding hight at the pass called the *Sierra Gorda* and the enemy immediately capitulated and we have now in camp about 5000 of the yellow rascals as prisoners of war and 5 general officers. La Vega of the number. The names of the others have not been learned, one who more of negro than Indian is named Genl. Penes.[58] It has been a great hall of our net about 40 pieces of canon and a great deal of ammunition and 30,000 dollars in cash in the pay chest. The attack on the extreme right[59] of the enemys works was partially made to day by Genl. Pillows Brigade and completely failed with a very severe loss to the 2nd Regt. My loss was only 1 killed 6 wounded. The attack failed and while Pillow was drawing off his Brigade the news was brought him of the surrender of the enemys whole force including that which had repulsed him. He is no Genl. and on the field of action, has

[57]Cerro Gordo.

[58]In a different hand,—probably that of Governor David Campbell,—is interlined *Pinson*. The name should be *Pinzon*.

[59]"Right" from the Mexican position.

no decision or judgt. He was wounded in the arm, and I may say that Genl. Shields who went yesterday with his Brigade to the support of Twiggs and whose Brigade was in the fight to day was mortally wounded. The enemy would have fallen into our hands without the attack that was made by Pillow as they did although he was repulsed.

I think I may say though for myself and my Regt. that we conducted ourselves so as to draw applause. The calm [?] soldier like conduct of the Regt., its good order under fire, was the subject of remark and is well know[n], how much they are under my control in action.

Genl. Scott is making a blazing campaign through this country—already has taken 10,000 prisoners, constituting 2 armies and 400 pieces of cannon and 10,000 stands of small arms and tomorrow he will be in Jappala, and in two weeks may be in the City of Mexico. I wish to go on to the Capital, and hope it may be my fortune to see the City of Mexico before the campaign is over. We lost about 100 killed and say 200 wounded—this is a guess. The new Rifle Regt. suffered severely in the fight and the 2nd Ten. Regt. suffered severely in Pillows repulse. Scott is an able commander but he loves flattery and I have no taste to hang about him and offer him praises. He is doing the affair up well here now.

The Battle will be called the *Siera Gorda.* Twiggs is after St. Anna and may get to Jallapa to night. Worth follows in the morning.

22. CAMP NEAR JALLAPA, MEXICO, April 25, 1847.

I can only write you a few lines to keep you advised of our movements. I wrote you from the Plan del Rio and made an addition to the letter after the battle of the 18th at the pass of the Sierra Gorda. Our relative Li[eu]t. Col. Cummings was shot through the foot in the action but the wound is not dangerous He is said to have behaved well and conducted himself gallantly, but the misfortune of the command was that they were beaten off by the enemy. On the morning of the 20th we took up the line of march for this place, leaving the 2nd Ten. Regt. at the Plan del Rio, to take care of the wounded and the ammunition and stores and arms taken from the enemy. At night we reached the very extensive and favorite Hacienda of Genl. Santa Anna called Encerro. It had been very lately occupied by his family and abandoned in haste before the approach of our army who pursued the flying enemy. It is a most magnificent place, a fine house very richly furnished, a very beautiful church in the yard nearly completed and for many miles the whole country is enclosed with the best stone fence I ever saw. Then near and in the rear of the residence is a most beautiful artificial pond (made by a dam across a large spring branch) which covers several acres of ground and is so elevated as to water many thousand acres of land by irrigating ditches. There is a large sugar manufactory on the same farm. Santa Anna is immensely wealthy owning nearly the whole country from Jallapa to Vera Cruz. He has three princely residences between those points. The Hacienda of Mango del Clavo (Handle of the Key)[60] is 15 miles from Vera Cruz—2 miles from the main road. I saw the place from the road. Then at the National Bridge there is another princely mansion of his, and Fncerro is 6 miles from Jallapa. Jallapa is a most beautiful town, situated in a high mountain region, surrounded by a rolling but very rich country and as fine a climate as the June climate of Abingdon. The mountains here rise very high and the Orizava[61] with its snow clad summit is to be seen every where. We are encamped 3 miles on the road west from Jallapa. On an aqueduct which conveys

[60] *Manga de Clavo.* Colonel Campbell's translation is not correct.
[61] Orizaba.

water to a manufactory of cotton owned by Don Gartia,[62] the god father of Santa Anna. The water is very pure and as cold as the spring water of your country. We have no need of the ice or snow from Orizava, and ice is not used here at all except the Indians make ice cream for sale on the streets. Jallapa is finely watered and one of the cleanest places I ever saw. The population is more of the European than in any town I have seen and look respectable and intelligent. Yet the mass of the population of this country are the *unadulterated* race and lineal descendants of the Indians conquered by Cortez, and are evidently to this late day but little improved, their habits being much the same that they were 200 years ago. The streets of Jallapa are all paved with stone as is the National road from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, it is rough all the way, but finely graduated and the Bridges are the best I ever saw.

Genl. Twiggs' division is encamped near the town and the whole of Genl. Pattersons division is encamped in this vicinity. Genl. Worths division left here on the 20th and 9 miles from here they found 9 pieces of cannon on the road at a pass which the enemy intended to fortify, but they had abandoned the place before he approached. He pushed on immediately to Perote and found that place also abandoned and took 50 pieces of cannon. A Mexican Col. appeared and delivered up to him all the munitions of war and government stores at that place, saying he was directed to do so by the Government. I cannot tell what further will be done, whether Genl. Scott with this army will venture further into the interior. He is obliged to draw his supplies or a large portion of them from Vera Cruz and his transportation is very small even for his army. And then his army will be soon much reduced by the discharge of the old volunteers, unless the new Regts. will be out very soon. I do not think he can safely move further until the new regiments come out and by that time the enemy will be able to raise an army and fortify before Puebla and before Mexico and give a large army much trouble yet to reach the capital. At present they are without an army, but the whole population of Mexico is extremely hostile to the *Los Americanos del Norte*,— No people could evince more hostility or bitterness than they do and it will not be wiped out in many generations. Genl. Scott is anxiously expecting a proposition from Santa Anna for an armistice and to treat for peace, but I think he will be disappointed and that they will suffer town after town and state after state to fall into our hands before they will bow to ask for peace. It is a stubborn and proud race and all believe that their rights have been wantonly outraged by our Govt. If Genl. Scott had 10,000 men who could remain with him 3 or 4 months he could now in my opinion march directly to the City of Mexico, with but slender or feeble opposition, but in two or three months they will assemble an army and be prepared to dispute the way with him. It is said that in Puebla and Mexico, they are melting down the church bells to make cannon and are manufacturing arms. This shows that they are not yet broken down in spirit.

I shall not expect to go further with my Regt. into the interior than this place, and by the 15th or 20th of May hope to be on my march for home. I dread the passage through Vera Cruz and across the gulph and through New Orleans, but I am willing now to pass any danger to get home, being tired of the army.

I have seen very little of Genl. Scott. He is always very polite to me when I hap[p]en to meet him. But he talks all and I have hardly had the chance in his presence to speak a word. He is mightily taken with Genl. Pillow who is a light vain man and can flatter Scott to his hearts

[62]This should probably be Garcia.

content but is very deceitful and cares nothing for Scott only so far as he can use him, being a hand plant of Mr. Polk and ready to do at any time any dirty work for him. Pillow has tried hard to demean himself properly towards me and as to personal treatment I could not complain, yet he is no part of a Genl. or military man and as light as a feather and is always making himself ridiculous by his foolishness.

I am very anxious to be free and to get from under the command of such a general. Nor would I ever again take a command in the army unless it was in the regular service, as there is so strong a feeling of jealousy and op[p]osition to the volunteers, that while the command and controul of the army and all its departments is in the hands of Regular officers, justice will never be done to the volunteers. The whole of the officers of the regular army seem to regret that the battle of Buena Vista was fought by volunteers and say it will break down the army and seem not to rejoice in the success of our arms in the hands of any but regulars. And volunteers have hard places, have fewer comforts or conveniences than regulars and when any thing is done all the praise is given to the Regulars. I will never enter the service again as a volunteer unless it be to defend my native land and my own hearth stone.

We will have to take Genl. Taylor for the next President for nothing now can prevent his election. I shall support him in preference to a democrat. But I know he is nothing but an army man, whose whole life has been spent in and devoted to the army and his mind and views do not extend beyond that limit. He is an honest, brave and clever man, but he will be more influenced by the army than any officer of high standing that I know of—far more so than would Scott. But he has the position and no one can oust him from it. Scott is a man of a different order of intellect from Taylor. He is capable of filling high stations himself, is an able general, and an intelligent and accomplished man and I may say statesman. But old Zack has the manners to please all, being so plain, and easey and affable, that he does not beget jealousy in the breast of any one who meets with him. No one feels that he is his superior, but his equal or inferior and each thinks he can control and manage such a mind, but not so with Scott. He is not so plain and easey in his manners and is disposed to make men feel his superiority and that he is the great man.

I will write again soon. Present me to Col. John C. and my sincere love to my dear aunt.

[Postscript] I presume Genl. Scott's despatches will show the particulars of the surrender at the Sierra Gordo, and the names of the officers of rank who were taken prisoners, and therefore I will not write about them. One Genl. officer and one Col. in the Mexican army was killed—Genl. Velasques[63] or some such name.) We have here all the tropical fruits in great abundance. The pine apple, plantin, Banana, orange, citron, etc., and vegetables, green peas, snap beans, lettice, rosting ears, etc., but in camp we can't enjoy them as we have not the means of cooking them and hence we live very rough and plain. My fare has been worse since I came to Vera Cruz and on here than it has been since I have been in Mexico.

This is a most delightful climate. The air is always pure, cool and elastic—never sultry in the shade—the sun in the day is hot, but the shade always cool.

I saw Col. Joseph E. Johnston the day I left the Plan del Rio (20th). He is in good spirits and I have no doubt will recover. He was badly

[63]Velazquez.

wounded. He will be brought to Jallapa as will all the wounded. Johnston stands high in the army.

23. NEAR THE BALIZE, LA., May 20, 1847.

I have the pleasure of announcing to you and my dear Aunt the fact that I have safely arrived in the United States and am now rapidly ascending the Mississippi River on the ship Henry Prat, towed by the Steam boat Panther and will arrive on tomorrow at noon at New Orleans. On the 5th inst while at Jalapa, I was ordered to march on towards Mexico City at the head of a brigade, Genl. Pillow having left for home, but on that day Genl. Scott changed his plan and his orders and directed the whole of the old volunteers to march to Vera Cruz and thence home by the way of New Orleans and there be discharged. I set out from Jalapa on the 6th and reached Vera Cruz on the 10th embarked with my whole Regt. on the Henry Pratt a sail ship, and reach[ed] the mouth of the Miss. on the 18th and was towed over the bar that day, but lay at anchor until this morning. We are now rapidly ascending the river. I hope to get off from New Orleans by the 26 or 27 and shall be at home by the 5th or 6th June. My Regt. is now in good health. I left two wounded at Jalapa. Col. Joseph E. Johnston, I left at Jalapa improving rapidly. Present my truest love to my dear Aunt, and remember me to my friend Col. John Campbell and all friends I am truly yours.

[Postscript]—Col. D. H. Cummings who was shot through the foot at Cerro Gordo, came on with me to Vera Cruz and has preceded me to New Orleans on a steam vessel, he was improving rapidly.

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WERT
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